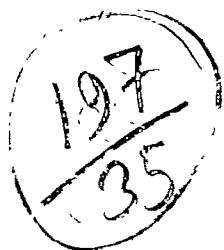


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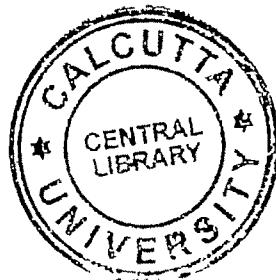
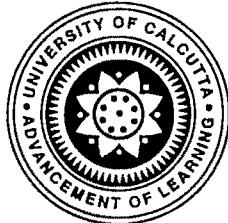
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Chief Editor
Sinjini Bandyopadhyay



Editor of this Volume
Sudeshna Chakravarti



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Preface

The present issue of the Journal of the Department of English, University of Calcutta has aimed to combine the past and the present, tradition and looking to the future, abstract theories and textual study and analysis. Only in this way we believe, is a complete understanding of literature possible.

Likewise in the era of globalisation and mass communication, English has wider meaning than formerly. What we mean by English Literature is not simply English written within the British Isles but other English-speaking nations as well. American or U.S Literature had been well-known earlier and more recently Australian, Canadian and Caribbean Literature have entered the realm of our consciousness. All these topics, incidentally, are taught, as options, in our Department. It is hardly necessary to speak of Indo-Anglican Literature. Some of the world famous writers of our time are Indian or South-Asian, at least in origin or ancestry, but producing their major works through the medium of English. Even English translations of works, originally written in vernacular Indian languages, are subjects of study and discussion. We have tried to create a composite picture of these various facets.

The first two essays in our anthology are on important subjects of literary philosophical theory. The next four portray in different ways, the meeting points between the East and the West, something which Kipling had declared would never happen. Gandhi fought the British, using their own language, as one of the weapons. One of the articles discusses the nuances of this matter. The English translation of a Bengali play by Utpal Dutt in which history and myth appear as symbols of the present, is analysed. Another work that is discussed presents an interplay between an Indian setting and a Shakespearean play. Perhaps most striking is the comparison between a work by Chatterjee, historical-cum-psychological and a novel by Fowles. Both deal with the problem of identity in the context of Bengal or Victorian England. A study of particular eras in European literary history are matters of interest and importance. One essay discusses two great works of the Spanish Renaissance dealing with the theme of illusion. Another pinpoints certain aspects of the Romantic Movement and mindset.

Gender studies perhaps constitute a “sunrise industry” in the realm of theory and criticism. Simone de Beauvoir had declared that a woman is

created, not born. In other words, femininity is as much sociological as biological. It is now believed that the same is true about gender and that the dividing line between the two sexes is fluid and shifting. Two essays analyse this issue with reference to a novel by Hemingway—considered the most aggressively masculine writer and another by a woman writer of a later period. Another much discussed issue today is child abuse. The matter is not simple. What kind of family is more suitable for a child, a traditional or a modern or post-modern one? Does a mother's frustrated longing for liberation create a backlash for a child? This is debated in the context of a novel which might be considered post-modern. This issue of the journal attempts to present a comprehensive and attractive picture of English Literature, in the widest sense of the word, as it is taught and studied today.

Sudeshna Chakravarti

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Narratology and Its Discontents

Ramkrishna Bhattacharya

One of the many old familiar literary terms that has of late become a focus of special critical attention for its supposed technical value is the verb ‘narrate’ and whatever derivatives are to be coined from it. Some of the examples are: narratee, narrator, narrative, narrativity, and last but not least, narratology. It has been claimed that narratology is ‘a science analogous to linguistics’ (Porter 193). A precise date, 1969, has been fixed to denote the birth of narratology, although it is admitted that Aristotle’s *Poetics* too can be regarded as a narratological work (Baldick 146). The proponents of narratology are the French structuralists and Russian formalists, such as Vladimir Propp. Not a few books and handbooks, large, middling and small, have appeared, presumably to help the students and lay readers to understand this new branch of study.

In what follows I propose to examine the validity of narratology as a science and the attempts made by the narratologists to include every form of story-telling, irrespective of genres.

A

Any field of study and the approach to be made in studying it require precise definitions. The word, narrative, as used by the narratologists is lacking in precision. Michael J. Toolan takes four pages to describe what narrative stands for but no clear idea emerges out of it. The most minimalist definition he offers is: “A perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events” (7). He then goes on to explain some of the words that are crucial to this proposed definition.

This definition misses one vital element, which may be supplemented by Traugott and Pratt’s definition of narration. It is “essentially a way of *linguistically* representing past experience, whether real or imagined” (1980: 248, qtd. Toolan 6). The narration then has to be verbal, not pictorial or partly pictorial.

But not all narratologists agree with this definition. Scholes and Kellogg propose to exclude drama, a story without a story-teller (Toolan 6) whereas Paul Cobley would include *visual* representations, particularly films in the domain of narrative (153). There are also other narratologists who would not leave anything out of their area of study, not even lyric poems. Referring to Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper”, Abrams writes that in this poem “we

infer from what the lyric speaker says that, coming unexpectedly in the Scottish highlands upon a girl reaping and singing he stops, attends, meditates, and then continues his climb up the hill" (123).

If this ever-expanding domain of narrative is to be admitted, one wonders why the sums of arithmetic in the school textbooks involving time and work, payment of interest, and profit and loss are not studied by narratologists!

Second, a story may be told/written in its proper chronological sequence, or the sequence may be altered by the narrator to serve his/her own purpose. The early Russian formalists called the first, *fabula*, and the second, *sjuzhet*. Their French counterparts called these *histoire* and *discours* respectively. Chatman's English rendering, *story* and *discourse*, are considered to be "roughly equivalent" to these terms (Toolan 9). Alas, the thing is not that simple. Some other narratologists prefer a third term, *text*, which must be placed somewhere between or after the original binary. Rimmon-Kenan's schema is as follows:

STORY-TEXT-NARRATION

(NB. 'narration' in place of 'discourse').

Bal prefers another arrangement:

FABULA-STORY-TEXT

(NB. The mixture of terms: 'story' in place of 'sjuzhet').

Now to 'discourse'. The word means different things in linguistics and cultural theory. *Discours* in French is a synonym for conversation but the technical sense, as applied to narratology, has little or no relation to its original meaning. As Baldick admits: 'Confusingly, another distinction is made between these two terms (*sc. histoire* and *discours*) in narratology, were *histoire* is story, and *discours* is language or narration' (59). In linguistics, however, 'Discourse is the name given to units of language longer than a single sentence' (Baldick 59).

The word 'text' is no less vague than 'narrative'. One young scholar once told me, 'Whatever can be read is a text.' Presumably she was repeating what she had been taught by her teacher. I mildly enquired, 'Do the lines on the palm constitute a text?' She looked at me, apparently not very sure what to say. I told her, 'After all, the astrologers do so. They *read* the lines as you read the lines of a poem.' She opened her mouth to say something, perhaps to censure me for being facetious. I further pointed out, 'There are some compulsive readers who must read everything at hand. Paper bags made out of newspaper pages serve as their reading material if nothing better is available. Would you call that *reading* proper?'

I tell this story only to point out that words are used in very imprecise

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ways in narratological texts (or should I say ‘discourses’?). But such random use of terms and fundamental disagreements in relation to the basic approach to a story debar narratology from being regarded as something approaching to a science. The field is open to anybody and everybody with little or no knowledge of literature as such. I hope to have shown that narrative, as Hawthorn admits is “[A] term which is much used but about which there is limited consensus when it comes to defining its meaning” (224). Like another word, narration, this is also “a rather slippery term in contemporary NARRATIVE THEORY, and is given different weight by different theorists” (224).

In the second part of this article I propose to show that the attempt to include any genre that tells a story in whichever way conceivable, dramatic or narrative, is misdirected and should be rejected out of hands.

B

Genre is a well-known term, meaning a ‘literary form’ (Abrams 75). The number of genres should not be considered unlimited although the variety of literary forms existing in practice is quite large. Then there are mixed genres. Polonius enumerates different kinds of plays: ‘tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical comical-historical-pastoral ...’ (*Hamlet*, 2.2.379-81). The speech is meant to provoke a smile, but there is a method underlying the enumeration. We are first told of four basic genres: tragedy, comedy, history play, and pastoral. Then we are taken to the mixed genres that make use of two or three such genres. After Shakespeare we had further sub-genres, such as comedy of humours, comedy of manners, heroic tragedy and the like. Pastoral play has died a natural death although historical play still thrives. New genres have appeared to replace old ones, the novel, the short story and the one-act play being the most prominent.

A distinction is still to be made between two basic literary forms: one which tells a story through conversation, and the other which employs both conversation and narration. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle distinguishes between epic and tragedy on the basis of this clear-cut formal difference. Epic is meant to be heard from the mouth of a rhapsode. He tells the whole story. This is why Aristotle calls epic a narrative that uses only one kind of meter, whereas tragedy is meant to be performed by actors, not through narration, using various meters (3.5, 4.1, 1449b, 10-11 and 26-27).

In the *Republic*, Book 3, Socrates uses two terms, *diegesis* and *mimesis*, to point out the basic difference between these two. He tells Adimantus:

There is one kind of poetry and tale-telling which works wholly

through imitation, ...and another which employs the recital of the poet himself, best exemplified, I presume, in the dithyramb, and there is again that which employs both, in epic poetry and in many other places ... (394d-e).¹

Later critical practice since Aristotle has given a wider connotation to the term, mimesis. All works of art, audio-visual, visual and purely auditory such as poetry, drama, painting, sculpture and music (both vocal and instrumental) have been included in the omnibus term mimesis, sometimes with dubious effect. Words like reflection, imitation, or suggestion mean little when we come to such a purely non-mimetic art as architecture and instrumental music. Yet the fact remains that the distinction between *diegesis* and *mimesis* holds true in so far as they are applied to epic, romance and novel on the one hand and drama and film on the other. To call a narrative an *illusion of mimesis* (Genett's emphasis) is to mix up the fundamental difference between the two (Hawthorn 80). Similarly, Rimmon-Kenan's claim that *diegesis* is roughly equivalent to "story" is unacceptable. As Hawthorn points out:

This extension can lead us into some terminological contradictions.

For if *diegesis* is equivalent to story, then *extra-diegetic* must mean 'outside the story', and therefore could refer us to the actual *telling* of the story, the comments from a narrator who is not a member of the world of the story. But this is exactly the opposite of what we started with ... (80).²

It is difficult to conceive of a 'pure' narrative in the sense that there will be no dialogue. There are of course a few short stories by Kafka which eschew conversation altogether. But such stories are mere vignettes that tell only a part of the story, not a complete one. In fact, even a short short-story without any dialogue would be rather boring. As Alice complained, '[W]hat is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?' (25).

Narrating a story thus involves recounting some event/s and acting out the speeches, all by a rhapsode, the archetypal narrator or story-teller. Drama, on the other hand, requires more than one actor to play the roles of different characters in the play. Monologues or monodramas by Anton Chekhov, such as *The Swan Song*, may be cited as exceptions. Nearer in time we may also mention Saonli Mitra's *Nathabati Anathabat* (*Having a Lord and Yet Not Having One*) which also belongs to this kind of play. In fact, such plays are nothing but revivals of old genres: a soliloquy addressed to the audience or revival of the *kathakatā* tradition. This tradition is not fundamentally different from the rhapsodic one although there is no question of one influencing the other. They flourished independent of each other. It may also

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be noted that Saonli Mitra utilizes a chorus-like assemblage of people to help her performance.

These exceptions do not rule out the essential difference between the narrative and the dramatic. The experimental pieces mentioned above use the narrative device on the stage: the story is still told either through speech alone or through the mixture of narration and speech. Even Brecht's epic theatre is basically a play with actors, each playing a different role.

Narratology seeks to overlook and undermine this very elementary distinction between the epic and the dramatic by focusing only on one common factor: both tell stories. The way of telling a story through speeches requires greater skill. It also compels the dramatist to delimit the time and action of the play. Aristotle very shrewdly observes that drama, both tragedy and comedy, was more estimable than epic and lampoon (3.2, 1449a6). Furthermore, even though epic poetry corresponds to tragedy in many respects, the difference in length makes the two art forms quite distinct (3.5, 1449b11-12). Aristotle also notes that at first people used to make no distinction between tragedy and comedy in this respect (3.5, 1449b15-16). In spite of his high regard for Homer, Aristotle believes that tragedy surpasses epic in no fewer than seven respects (12.2, 1462a5-1462b15).

These differences in the art of representation, one bound exclusively to dialogues, the other, freely mixing narration and dialogue (and encompassing as many events as the poet likes), can never be overlooked in any serious study of literature. The same difference would hold true when we come to novel and modern drama. The very art of telling a story through dialogue should call for a new approach. It cannot and should not be mixed up, as is done in the umbrella approach adopted by narratology. Genres are real; the common factor, story-telling, should not be allowed to do away with the basic differences between the genres.

C

Narratology, then, has no claim to be regarded as a science and, however objective its approach may appear to be, it is nothing but old wine in a new bottle. Profusion of critical jargons cannot save it from a major drawback, namely, complete disregard for the differences in two major genres, epic and drama. Now I propose to point out another fundamental weakness in the formalist approach itself. This weakness inheres even in the *Poetics*, and the same is true of Vladimir Propp's study of Russian folktales. Later narratologists have all inherited this weakness.

The weakness lies in the complete separation of the structure of the story from the story itself. Not all stories can be dramatized or filmized. Nor can

all stories be written in the same way. Bertolt Brecht's adaptation of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* is available in two forms: narrative (novel) and dramatic. They are thus titled *The Threepenny Novel* and *The Threepenny Opera*. The form of the novel is fairly conventional but the drama is not always what an opera is supposed to be. Although song and dance occupy a part of the play, dialogues are more important, for it is through them that the message of the play is conveyed. Brecht was unabashedly didactic. Entertainment, he believed, must also be edifying as much as edification should be entertaining (34).

To take another example, the two-in-one novel or short story demands a frame or matrix narrative suited to the embedded or nested narrative (it would be easier to write "frame story" and "main story", but they would not sound pompous or technical). Aristotle admits that not any story could be the basis of tragedy. It requires a special kind of story that is not only serious but contains something terrible. As he writes:

At first poets used to pick out stories *at random*; but nowadays the best tragedies are constructed around a few households, e.g. about Alcmeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus and any others whose lot it has been to experience something terrible—or to perform some terrible action (7.2, 1453a18-22 Emphasis added).

Aristotle does not rule out the tragedian's right to add or alter some events in handling the traditional stories (7.4, 1453b24-25). Yet he recognizes that tragedies are concerned with a limited number of families. Although their search was guided by chance rather than art, poets discovered how to produce this kind of effect in plots; so they are forced to turn to just those households in which this kind of suffering has come about (7.4, 1454a10-13).

What Aristotle says about tragedy applies to every genre and sub-genre. The mere structure, abstracted out of certain folktales or legends, cannot be the proper guide to the understanding of the *element* in the story that makes the author, the plot-maker, to choose or invent one particular story by rejecting others. The general typology is of little help in evaluating how the form and the content of a specific story (as narrated or acted), achieves its desired effect. Gerard Genette calls embedded narrative the one sure sign of fictivity (Porter 189), that is, the story is to be regarded as purely fictional, not to be regarded as one that actually happened. A sailor's yarn or an account narrated by a big game hunter is the most typical example of fictivity. Yet, this fictivity may not be altogether devoid of "factuality": some grain of truth may very well be there in such accounts.

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Furthermore, there is also the question of the author's intention of choosing the two-in-one device of story-telling. The embedded narrative containing some supernatural event may be too tempting to write about, although the author may not believe an iota of it. The frame narrative in such a case could be utilized to tell the reader that the embedded narrative is not to be taken seriously. On the other hand, if the author intends to make his readers believe, however temporarily, the content of a ghost story, he may very well utilize the same device by asking a narrator claim that he or she actually experienced it. In such a case, the frame narrative would be of less importance than the embedded narrative.

Narratologists seldom (if at all) address themselves to these questions. So far as they recognize the existence of a narrator, whether it is a first-person narrative or a third-person narrative, narratology is under no compulsion to accept the death certificate of the author written by Dr Roland Barthes (142-48). At the same time, by focusing fully on the patterns and designs of the text, narratological approach cannot be reconciled with reader response theory. Barthes, Genette and Iser can never join hands to provide a unified approach to story-telling, -writing, and -listening, -reading. Even if we decide to dispense with the story-teller or -writer, the text of the story will always raise a question: Why has the story been told or written in one particular way and not the other? Such a question would inevitably lead us not only to the *nature* of the story but to the *intention* of the writer as well. No glib talk about "intentional fallacy" (Abrams 90) can erase the fact that the author intends to write a story with a particular end in view. He or she may intend to merely entertain readers, to edify them through entertainment, or to move readers without either entertaining or edifying them. This may not be true of lyric poetry, but so far as fiction is concerned, whether fictive or factual, no other conclusion is possible. Concentrating solely on the structure of the story or the narrative devices employed, the narratologists tend to miss the storiness of the story.

Notes and References :

1. Since there is no single word for *diegesis* in English, translators have to opt for such expressions as 'simple narration' (Lindsay, Rowse, Sterling and Scott) or 'pure narration' (Shorey). Sometimes a more explanatory phrase is used, e.g. 'narration without imitation' (Shorey), 'through the poet's own report of things' (Rowse), 'the poet tells his own story' (Lindsay), 'the poet recites in his own person' (Sterling and Scott). A dithyramb here stands for the type of elaborate Greek lyric which 'like the odes of Pindar and Bacchylides narrates a myth or legend with little if any dialogue' (Shorey 231n). Sterling and Scott render dithyramb as 'lyric narrative' (91).

2. The way Plato explains the concept of *diegesis* to his rather obtuse disciple includes indirect form of address or speech (393e-394b). But when the same speech is made, so to say, within quotation marks, in the direct mode of narration, it amounts to *mimesis*. Plato was paraphrasing in prose some lines of the *Iliad* 1.12-42, using the indirect mode of narration all through. Shorey complains, "Plato here further complicates the matter by sometimes using imitation in the narrower sense of dramatic dialogue as opposed to narration"(225n).

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Enmity is Not Enough: The Perspective Of Occidentalism In Postcolonial Studies Today

Shubhadeep Paul

Much has been said and written about the fantasies of the exotic ‘East’ that gripped the colonial mind but the complex construct of the ‘West’ from the perspective of the Easterner, more often than not with a strain of hatred, is not so hotly debated. Orientalism has been the cherished fancy of critical Postcolonial discourse because traditionally it has been regarded as the vantage point for the examination of East-West relations. For quite sometime, however, the relative significance of Occidentalism has been realised and once again an investigation into stereotypes has become necessary. If Saidian Orientalism had created discernible binaries between the ‘East’ and the ‘West’, Occidentalism too identifies significant polarities for itself. As such, Postcolonial Studies today is not justifiably complete without proper analyses of those oppositions that Occidentalism has abided by. This paper seeks to examine the major contentions that are created owing to perceptions of diametrical differences and accusations of hegemonic perversities of both camps of the East and the West.

Occidentalism has thrown up a new disputation in East-West relations, hitherto not perceived as quintessentially disruptive in discussions on Postcolonialism. So pressing are those disputations that it would not be an exaggeration to claim that Occidentalism is the new-sprung challenge in Postcolonial Studies today. Orientalism fostered denigrating fantasies that have accused as symptomatic of the sterility of the Western mind. This is borne out by the fact that even in the mid-1980’s, when Edward Said was asked at a conference held at the University of Essex to postulate reconsiderations of his extremely influential work *Orientalism*, his stubborn defence of his thesis was on the ground that orientalists, mainly nineteenth century, had played a decisive part in the formation of negative images of the Orient—something that lesser known scholars and writers (viz. A. L. Tibawi, Abdullah Laroui, Anouar Abdel Malik etc) not situated in academic power-positions in the West like Said, had already indicated.¹ Nonetheless, Said’s re-evaluation of his own work was instrumental in a way because it raised certain points that served as eye-openers in a new equation of power-politics that reshuffled the conventional take on the Postcolonial contract of ‘Subject-Other’ indicia.

While defining the Orient, Said described it as ‘a currently important and politically urgent region of the world’². However, the importance and urgency of this zone became considerably diminished in the very discourse of the critics of Orientalism like Said himself because it indirectly seconded the Orient to the

relative positional superiority of the West at that time, that in a way ironically put the Saidian project at a disadvantage. However, following this, Said postulates his argument in words that have a decisive bearing on Occidentalism:

[T]he line separating Occident from the Orient...is less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production...however, neither...the division between Orient and Occident is unchanging nor is it...simply fictional. It is to say...the Orient and the Occident are facts produced by human beings, and as such...components of the social, and not the divine or natural world.³

Picking up this cue from Said himself, an exploration of the present day contextual analysis on East-West relations might very well be attempted. True to Said's pronouncements, the 'division' between the Orient and the Occident has indeed undergone change in recent times and incidentally those changes are predicated not on 'fictional' constructs but factual upheavals on an international plane. It gives us a cue to the world's most pressing problems such as fundamentalism, terrorism, xenophobia and the like. Most pronounced is the anti-Western camp whose extremist views might have affected the ordinary citizen in the form of terrorist upsurges but are nonetheless perceived as ideological in many countries of the Islamic world. Interestingly, this menace to many, is a revolutionary endeavour for others such as the jihadis—the self-proclaimed enemies of the Western world. Thus it would not be wrong to state that the seeds of hatred against the Western world lie in the West itself, spurred by stereotypes fostered by the Western world itself, emerging in newer forms in the 'East'.

The Western 'gaze' on the Orient did not take into account the immense heterogeneity inherent in the latter. For all its merits therefore, Orientalism offered a generalised explanation of the nuances and characteristics of what was defined as the Orient—something that explains the many critiques of Orientalism that emerged after Said. A considerable disgruntlement is also due to the fact that critical stereotyping has made 'Orientalism' such a problematic term that concurrently it 'is by now...polluted beyond salvation.'⁴ However even those stereotypifications were created in the first place because the West's age-old attitude towards the East has always been an ambivalent one. On one hand, the East was looked upon as a source of inspiration, wisdom and culture (and therefore enticing), on the other hand, it was also a site of dread and alarm. If this was where the Nalanda of yore was situated, it is also the same locale where the hippies arrived in the 1960's in search of 'pop nirvana'. Simultaneously, it is this very Orient that has been attributed with sinister evocative phrases viz 'yellow peril', 'Asiatic hordes', 'Oriental despotism' et al. No wonder the Orient has provoked responses from two opposite extremes, ranging from the 'eulogistic' to the 'defamatory'.⁵

With a change in the balance of power in the international scene, the complication in East-West relations is currently intensified more than ever. The rise of the ‘Rest’ (counter to the ‘West’) in recent times has disturbed the hitherto acknowledged status quo of economic transaction and cultural exchange, where the West was perceived as the repository of promise that largely fostered a one-way mobility from the East to the West. If America’s rise to power since the Second World War was a predominant determinant of globalisation (with its adjacent promises and ills), America’s very recent economic meltdown and the domino-effect of spontaneous chain reaction it created overseas in countries whose economies were related through bilateral trade and MNC operations, are signs of a questioning that has already sprung in those affected geographical parts of the globe, concerning the desirability of the grand ‘American Dream’. Although the overall economic picture does not seem promising at this moment, the East is experiencing a significant improvement in many aspects of life. The rise of the Orient in this context is predicated on the ground that it is based on a matrix that is fundamentally opposed to the Western mould. Alastair Bonnett gives a telling explanation on the conceptual opposition that exists about the West, counter to the ‘Orient’:

That the west is the place where the sun goes down ensured its most ancient and enduring connotation...the place of death...a site of life’s ending, of finality but also of mystery and mature completion. The notion that ideas arise in the East and move westwards reflects this chain of associations...The west is an old word. But it is also a modern idea.⁶

It is interesting to note that this linkage of the west with death that inspired feelings of fear and dread of the latter has an anthropological basis also. The ‘white’ conquerors coming from the direction of death (i.e. west) made a dreaded concoction with the fact that traditionally in many African and East-Asian societies, white symbolised the colour of death. Clearly, we observe a common trope between the barbaric ‘yellow hordes’ as the Mongols were described, and the white conquerors of the West. In other words, colonialism, imperialism and conquest are not one-way processes and the relationship between the East and the West, eventually, must be understood as one of ‘power, domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony.’⁷

As such, it is equally necessary to consider the ‘reverse gaze’ of the Orient here to analyse the changing international scenario today. Aijaz Ahmed decisively comments on the continual ‘rapid rate of global restructuring’ that has profoundly influenced East-West relations:

The *relative* economic decline of the United States—relative both to the preceding long wave of its own prosperity and to the growth rates of its main competitors—means, however, that it no longer

commands the hegemonic position it commanded previously, and that key decisions affecting global economy...must be made, rather, by several regimes of advanced capital in several countries, collectively and simultaneously.⁸

It is unique therefore that the management of 'advanced capital' in today's world depends on a global self-organisation where military intervention and warfare are not perceived as the best possible solutions to settle conflicts concerning production and distribution. Moreover decolonisation endeavours in many different forms in countries of the Orient have considerably empowered these nations, enabling them with the potential to have a greater say in dictating capitalist relations wherever and to whatever extent it is possible, necessary or desirable. As such, it is quintessentially important to consider the nature of the evaluation of the West in the eyes of the *non-West* (if we can use such a generalised term for the sake of referentiality).

In its most fundamental (and fundamentalist!) sense, Occidentalism refers to the 'dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies' but ironically it is the Frankensteinian monster created by the West itself. Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit explain the ramifications of this fact, not only for the West but also for the rest of the world:

The view of the West in Occidentalism is like the worst aspect of its counterpart, Orientalism, which strips its human targets of its humanity...its bigotry simply turns the Orientalist view upside down...Prejudices are part of the human condition. But when the idea of others as less than human gathers revolutionary force, it leads to the destruction of human beings.⁹

Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism in its very extremes, lose focus on the root purpose of their initiatives by demonising the West. Neither the constant demonisation of the West, nor that of its enemies (elusive or self-proclaimed) is going to be of much use to anyone, coming from any part of the globe.¹⁰ Of course, a naive belief in universal progress driven by business and industry will not prove enough in this complicated and fast-changing world of today. It has often been pointed out by dissenters of capitalism that leaving everything open in the name of 'free trade' will not address the pressing problems of today that stem largely from a variety of inequalities. No civilisation can sustain itself if it does not maintain healthy correspondence with other civilisations and cultures and if the psychology of its people fails to tolerate humanitarianistic values, making them soulless automatons who are faithless enough to stamp on themselves, often unquestionably, a particular creed, faith or ideology. The understanding is that no '-ism' (capitalism or communism; terrorism or fundamentalism; orientalism or occidentalism) can fully address discontents that are, to use Zygmunt Bauman's 'glocal' in nature. A broader outlook to things,

mutual participation and the feeling of mutuality, a greater awareness of international affairs yet the ability to associate oneself with grassroot-level restructurings of society such as individual involvement in community work and most importantly not to be swept off one's feet by the traps of stereotypifications of nation, class, race, ethnicity or point of origin is the crying need of the hour.

So what implications does Occidentalism carry for current day Postcolonial Studies? Obviously the terminological significance of Postcolonialism's most memorable coinages (most notably that of the 'Subject' and the 'Other' and the vast heterogeneity of complex exchanges between the two—economic, social, political and cultural) remain highly valuable even today because under no circumstance whatsoever can we say that the lopsided polarity between the Orient and the Occident has now been rightly balanced. At the same time, the oppositions that Occidentalism has identified for itself and its agendas are also not liberal and the reverse imperialistic dimension of the former does not offer a bright picture for the future of this world. The term 'universal empire' that has been cautiously employed by the United States to utilise its dominant economic and military position to facilitate a new 'policy of preemption, military invasion undertaken with intention of regime change, not land grabbing', has been called to question after the Iraq fiasco and the debacle in Afghanistan in 2007. America had made enemies earlier as well, viz. during the Reagan era. But 'anti-Americanism' during the Bush era had sky-rocketed to a peak, hitherto unperceived. However, the economic recession in the United States (that has been compared to the Great Depression of the thirties) has proved once again that no superpower can command supremeness to the extent that it can afford an insular prosperity, oblivious of the tragedies taking place overseas. Sceptics have termed globalisation as the disguised code-synonym for U.S. Imperialism but globalisation has its positive merits as well and since it is here to stay, it is upto nation-states to decide how to makes the best of it through bilateral or multilateral policies. Moreover, whatever trajectory the future of this planet might take, it is likely that nation states will remain and strive to promote their individual nativist and decolonisation projects, such that cultural imperialism of any potential region of affluence and influence does not thwart the survival and sustenance of less powerful but no less significant cultural paradigms and orders of living and expression. Raymond F. Betts makes an important point in this regard:

Imperialism and colonialism, attitudes of arrogance mobilized into doctrines of need and deed, markets and morality, have changed the world. There is no way to unchange that; history allows no going back. Accordingly, there is little likelihood that efforts to find an anterior authentic voice and a distinct historic identity will prevail in the Third World.¹¹

In this regard, the answer to the Orient's peace and prosperity is not self-valorisation via whatever ideology that holds itself so sacrosanct as to nullify the existence of variant creeds, nor is it needed that a particular zone or way of life be ruthlessly demonised so as to make it appear a villainish and not an alternate presence. Neither is the Occident all about soft bourgeois values, machine society, sterility of reason, nor is the Orient all about a heroic revolutionary spirit, organic unity of 'blood and soil', the inner life of the soul. There is more to human beings than a cluster of woefully misunderstood stereotypifications:

Whether described as hybrid or multi-ethnic, whether found in London or Kuala Lumpur, whether expressed in English or Gikuyu, the matter is necessarily of a contemporary blend...There should therefore be...various readings, different voices, other perspectives. Juxtaposed, if not complemented, these expressions of the human condition might allow a rich and balanced appreciation of what occurred and of what might yet become.¹²

Reference :

1. See Edward Said. "Orientalism Reconsidered". *Orientalism: A Reader*. Ed. A.L. Macfie. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. 345-361.
2. For a complete analysis read Gauri Vishwanathan's *Power, Politics And Culture: Interviews With Edward Said*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001.
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4. Lewis, B. *Islam And The West*. Oxford: O.U.P, 1993. 103.
5. For further details read J.J. Clarke's *Oriental Enlightenment. The Encounter Between Asian And Western Thought*. London: Routledge, 1997.
6. Bonnett, Alastair. *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics And History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 4-5.
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8. Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. New Delhi: O.U.P, 1992. 312.
9. Buruma, Ian and Avishai Margalit. *Occidentalism: The West In The Eyes Of Its Enemies* New York: Penguin Books, 2004. 10-11.
10. For further information, consult my essay-chapter "The Volatile Power-Equation: W(h)ither Postcolonialism?/Whether Neocolonialism?" in *Anxieties, Influences And After: Critical Responses to Postcolonialism and Neocolonialism*. Eds. Kaustav Bakshi, Samrat Sengupta, Subhadeep Paul. Delhi: Worldview Publications, 2009.61-82.
11. Betts, F. Raymond. *Decolonization* New York: Routledge, 110.
12. Ibid., 110.

Use of Language in Gandhi's 'Hind Swaraj'

Ranjan Auddy

The English language is still a hot topic of debate for us. But the pattern and tone of that debate has changed over the century. The topic is no longer whether English is a boon or a curse for Indians; rather we are debating if Indian English may be considered as an Indian language. An important revelation in this topic is Gandhi's use of Indianism in his translation of 'Hind Swaraj'.

In the last two decades we have had various observations and opinions by eminent linguists. Braj. B. Kachru has been talking of the existence of an Indian English for decades.¹ P. Dasgupta defines English in India as the 'Auntie Tongue'². He concludes that English is not 'one of us' but an important presence that one must be polite to; and Auntie is the way we express our politeness in the current social conjuncture; so the term 'Auntie Tongue' best expresses what English is to users of India.(Dasgupta : 1993). In 1994 Professor Pabitra Sarkar observes,

It is very difficult for me to say whether there is a distinct reference Group or a speech community associated with English. However in Calcutta at least there are two groups of English educated people who I can clearly identify. I will call the first the *Statesman* group, and the second the *Telegraph* group. Those who identify with *The Statesman* are more conservative. The reference point is English classics or at best Agatha Christie and Charles Dickens. The *Telegraph* group on the other hand, includes the younger generation which has grown up with Enid Blyton, Mills & Boon, and Michael Jackson and Bruce Springsteen.³

In 1997, Rushdie says confidently, 'English has become an Indian Language. Its colonial origin means that like Urdu and unlike all other Indian languages, it has no regional base; but in all other ways it has emphatically come to stay.'⁴

In pre-independent India, English was imagined as shackles upon Indians.⁵ It is time to retrospect the time and the eminent men who recommend vernacular strongly but kept on using English extensively. Agnihotri and Khanna noted that under the influence of Gandhi, the Zakir Hussain Committee in 1938 recommended the mother tongue as the medium of instruction; yet,

English medium schools and colleges multiplied rapidly....For freedom fighters coming from different parts of the country, it

constituted a shared mass of knowledge and a means of communication among themselves. They could also use the language of the rulers to subvert their rule. Leaders of the freedom movement needed English to decode and attack colonial designs. (Agnihotri and Khanna 1997 : 28)

In the eighteenth chapter of 'Hind Swaraj' Gandhi observes...our best thoughts are expressed in English; the proceedings of our Congress are conducted in English; our best newpapers are printed in English.' However he characteristically adds, 'If this state of things continues for along time, posterity will—it is my firm opinion—condemn and curse us.' (Parel 2004:103). However, if we move a little further back we may see that the growth of the English language on the Indian soil is an indispensable part of the history of Bengal renaissance (Rammohan's much quoted letter to Lord Amherst, dated 11th December 1823 is evidential). The language is inextricably linked with the cultural, social and political awakening of India in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. According to Gauri Viswanathan English studies was introduced with deep colonial imperial motives and created 'a class of hollow philistines called Babus' (Vishwanathan 1989:159) whose English, in the words of Braj. B. Kachru, was 'marked by excessive stylistic ornamentation, politeness and indirectness' (Burchfield 1990:509). Contrarily almost all the architects of the Bengal renaissance used the language quite powerfully without the ornamentation and the politeness of the babus. Raja Rammohan Roy used the language to negotiate with the colonizer, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay started their literary career in English, Swami Vivekananda and Keshab Chunder Sen mastered the language to reach out to a larger audience. However with the rise of nationalistic fervour, attitude towards English got complicated. English was then considered as shackles upon the minds of the natives rather than a means of development and progress. Both Gandhi and Tagore were advocates of this view and spoke strongly in favour of the project of making Hindi the national language. However both felt the need to use English to disseminate their ideas. Many of the leaders of late nineteenth and early twentieth century used English with such powers of adaptability to the Indian subject matter that they paved the way for subsequent Indian writers in English. Here I want to share my observations on Gandhi's use of English language in his 'Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule'.

In February 1916 at Benaras Hindu University Gandhi delivered a speech where he raised the issue of English in India:

I wanted to say it is a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening under the shadow of this great

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college, in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me.

(Mukherjee 2007:68)

Near a century has passed since the father of the nation uttered those words and today when Indian English is being recognized as separate from British English, as we look back at Gandhi's English, we find in him one of the founders of Indian English. The important work of Gandhi in this context is obviously 'Hind Swaraj'. It was this text that Tolstoy and Romain Rolland and Rajaji commented upon. It was through this, not the Gujarati text, that he hoped, as he put it, 'to use the British race' for transmitting 'the mighty message of ahimsa' to the rest of the world (Watson 1969:176). And it was to this text that he returned through his career as if to the source of his inspiration. It has been compared to such diverse works as Rousseau's 'Social Contract' (Heard, 1938:450), the 'Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola' (Catlin, 1950:215) and Chapter 4 of St. Matthew or St. Luke. It is not written in first person narration but in the form of a long dialogue between Reader and Editor, divided into twenty chapters. Herein Gandhi follows the western form of dialogue, that of Plato, Lucian, Dryden, Hume, and many others. The Editor is Gandhi's Socrates answering the questions of the Reader with simplicity and conviction.

The very composition of 'Hind Swaraj' has something heroic about it. It was written in ten days, between 13 and 22 November, 1909 on board the ship Kilonan Castle on the author's return trip to South Africa. The whole work was written under a spell of inspiration as it was written on the ship's stationary, and the writing went on at such a furious pace that when the right hand got tired, Gandhi continued with his left hand and the English translation was done only the next year.

On his own English Gandhi wrote, (a fortnight before his assassination) "English and Indian scholars of English believe there is something special in my English" (Mehrotra 2003:145). Indeed his English differed remarkable from contemporary Standard English and it can be clearly observed in 'Hind Swaraj'. The remarkable feature of Gandhi's English is its simplicity, matter-of-factness, its occasional use of loan words like 'Swadeshi' translations like 'Indian Home Rule' for 'Swaraj' and shifts from native proverbs such as 'One negative cures thirty-six diseases' and coining hybrid words like 'Englishtan' rhyming with 'Hindustan'.

In spite of being a lawyer Gandhi's English was miles away from the difficult language of suits and petitions as well as the vagueness which journalists writing in English in India still suffer from. As he hated the legal

profession he also wrote in a language which was the very antithesis to the language of lawyers. The lucidity of his words is an evidence of the clarity of his mind:

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is poignant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self. (Chapter 17)

However, his lucid prose sometimes sounds like sermon:

'...if we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of swaraj. It is swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. (Chapter 14)

The above extracts are evident of the fact that Gandhi had mastered the language in its most effective form of simplicity, precision and directness even before Bernard Shaw made these qualities essential for a modern writer.

However, at times it seems that he is attacking western civilization in the discourse of the colonizer: 'My firm opinion is that the lawyers have enslaved India, and they have accentuated the Hindu-Mahomedan dissensions, and have confirmed English authority.' (Chapter 11). The sentence, in its British pronunciation ('Mahomedan'), in the choice of vocabulary ('accentuated', 'dissensions') and in the overall structure is the representative of the language of the colonizer. Yet, on various occasions, we see Gandhi has maintained a distance from Standard English deliberately. In Chapter 7 there is a typical Indian mannerism in argument which we cannot fail to recognize. Arguing that the Indians are themselves responsible for their misfortunes the Editor says to the Reader:

They came to our country originally for purposes of trade. Recall the Company Bahadur. Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once we welcomed the Company's officers with open arms. We assisted them. If I am in the habit of drinking 'Bhang' and a seller thereof sells it to me, am I to blame him or myself?

Today, as we read these lines, we feel we have long left Babu English behind us and the world of Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan is visible in the horizon.

Indian loan words may not be large in number but they have a very strong presence in 'Hind Swaraj'. In using these words, Gandhi, consciously or unconsciously, carved new paths in English which would soon be walked upon by writers of Indian fiction in English. In fact he could not be unconscious of the importance of the usage of Indian words in English which was evident in the title of the English version of his work. In 1910 when he published the English version of the text from Natal he published it as 'Indian Home Rule'. But in 1921 he published the work under a modified title: 'Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule'. Not just the title his entire prose is coloured with Indian loan words like 'Rishis', 'Fakir', 'vakil', 'vaid' (Chapter 13) and 'kamadhuk', 'mulla', 'Dastur'. (Chapter 18)

Further there is another kind of Indianism like, when he translates 'kalijuga' as 'the Black Age'. There are a few allusions to Tulsidas in question here is 'paradheen sapnehu such nahin'(Tulsidas,1952:115). Sometimes the writer lifts Indian idiomatic expressions and proverbs and puts it in English. On lawyers, the Editor says, 'Their touts, like so many leeches, suck the blood of the poor people.' Or speaking about passive resistance, he says, 'He who uses it [passive resistance] perfectly understands his position. We have an ancient proverb which literally means: 'One negative cures thirty-six disease.' As annotated by Parel the word for negative in the Gujarati text is 'nanno', which carries the meaning of a firm 'no'. The proverb may be interpreted as follows: the ability to say a firm no will save you from many diseases.

Commenting on the use of English in postcolonial literatures, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin observes, 'The most interesting feature of its use [of English] in postcolonial literature may be the way in which it constructs difference, separation and absence from the metropolitan norm'(Ashcroft 1989:44). We see Gandhi's English can be seen as a Renaissance phenomenon in its mingling of Indian matter and western form. And it can also be seen as a postcolonial phenomenon as it does construct difference from British English.

Coming back to Gandhi's opinion about English, the man who denounced English education in the eighteenth chapter of 'Hind Swaraj', who felt shame and pain for being compelled to use it felt differently when, after the publication of 'The Untouchable' in 1935, M. R. Anand read out the novel to him in Sabarmati Ashram and wanted to know—rather mawkishly—whether he should continue to write exclusively in English. Gandhi's response was characteristically forthright. 'If so say your say in any language that comes to hand.'(Mehrotra 2003:13). The statement forecasts Kamala Das's 'Introduction':

....Why not let me speak in
 Any language I like? The language I speak
 Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
 All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
 Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
 It is as human as I am human, don't
 You see?

Today, if we believe in pluralism, what is the problem in accepting contradiction in our father of the nation? When we stop contradicting ourselves we stop being human. Gandhi's English is a rich legacy of Indian writing and speech in English. Today that legacy is more important and relevant than his views on English.

Notes & Reference :

1. See Braj. B. Kachru's 'The Indianization of English Language', Delhi, Oxford, 1983 and his other works like 'The Alchemy of English: the Spread, Functions and models of non-native Englishes', - Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1990. In 'Indianization of English Language' Kachru speaks of the 'twice-born' characteristic of English in India and argues for institutionalization of acculturation of a Western language in the linguistically and culturally pluralistic context of the subcontinent. (p 1).
2. See P. Dasgupta's 'The Otherness of English : India's Auntie Tongue Syndrome', New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1993, p. 201. In the same book Dasgupta observes : 'If English as it is spoken in India is a natural language, then normal linguistics, examining it, is bound to arrive at Kachru's conclusion that there is an Indian English...' The basic difference between Kachru and Dasgupta is while Kachru's deductions are based mainly on the fictions of Indian writings in English of the twentieth century Dasgupta's deductions are based on the general use of English in India.
3. See R. K. Agnihotri & A. L. Khanna's 'Problematizing English in India', New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1997, p. 181.
4. See Introduction in Rushdie ed. 'The Vintage Book of Indian Writing, 1947-97', New York, Vintage, 1997.
5. In the eighteenth chapter of 'Hind Swaraj' Gandhi says, 'It is worth noting that, by receiving English education, we have enslaved the nation' although he acknowledges realistically that 'we cannot altogether do without English education'since we are 'so much beset by the disease of civilization.' ('Hind Swaraj and Other Writings' edited by A. J. Parel, C.U.P., 2004).

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Resisting Revivalism: Utpal Dutt's *Hunting the Sun* and the Rediscovery of History

Abin Chakravarty

"...the real work of the committed writer is, as I said before, to reveal, demonstrate, demystify, and dissolve myths and fetishes in a critical acid bath." - Jean Paul Sartre.¹

Towards the conclusion of Jane Eyre, the narrator states:

"As to St. John Rivers, he left England: he went to India. He entered on the path he had marked for himself; he pursues it still. A more resolute, indefatigable pioneer never wrought amidst rocks and dangers. Firm, faithful and devoted; full of energy and zeal, and truth, he labours for his race: he clears *their* painful way to improvement; he hews down like a giant the prejudices of creed and caste that encumber it"² (emphasis mine).

The statements operate as a typical example of that hegemonic ideology of the so called civilising mission which was used to justify the colonial enterprise both at home and abroad by the colonisers. The fundamental concept of this myth is based on the conceptualisation of the colonised as an absolute 'Other' who is not only deprived of the civilisational illumination acquired by Europe but one who is in dire need of colonial intervention for his/her own improvement. This is precisely the idea that constitutes the basis of Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" where the colonised are described as "sullen peoples/Half devil and half-child", whose 'heathen Folly' had sent them to a "loved Egyptian night" from which the European white men are supposed to bring them gradually to 'light'³. What Kipling manages to achieve through such textual manoeuvrings is a blatant erasure of the pre-colonial past that the imperial spokesman invariably envisions as a dark night which is basically a textual, rhetorical extension of the European's own ignorance and it is this deliberate ignorance that eventually crystallises into a historical fact, fostering the myth of the supposed civilising mission by academically and institutionally locating the pre-colonial existence of the colonised as a derelict patch of unrelieved gloom marked by endless tales of misery, barbarity and stagnation. The dissemination of such assumptions consolidates the hegemonic authority of the colonial regime and Fanon therefore wrote:

"Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it."⁴

History thus becomes another tool of colonial hegemony as it gets inscribed by the inequalities of power and falls victim to the epistemic violence scrupulously effected by the machinations of colonial discourse. And the process of decolonisation therefore entails, among other things, a rediscovery of history—history from the perspective of the formerly colonised who found that their stories had been erased from the official records which virtually reeked with the smell of the bloodshed that ensured imperial domination. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins therefore write “Aside from the basic reviewing of a fragment of history when new ‘facts’ come to light, post-colonial histories attempt to tell the other sides of a story and to accommodate not only the key events experienced by a community (or individual) but also the cultural context through which these events are interpreted and recorded. Reconstructing the past in this way usually heralds the emergence of new voices and new tools for understanding the past.”⁵

This reconstruction and re-comprehension involves what Fanon called a ‘passionate research’, which is motivated by “the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others.”⁶ Tormented by the constant vilification heaped upon them by the colonising machinery, the colonised seek to transcend their sense of futile frustration by searching for an ideal that would not only furbish them with a new confidence necessary for anti-colonial self-assertion but also endow them with an ideal which they may seek to realise through the fruits of political independence. This is why in his remarkably powerful castigation of colonial discourse Aime Cesaire, one of the pioneers, along with Leopold Senghor, of the Negritude movement condemns Europe for destroying a civilisation that was based on “democratic societies... cooperative societies, fraternal societies.”⁷ Such an ideal vision of the pre-colonial past sets up also an ideal which may be realised through a post-colonial utopia. This is also evident from Gandhi’s use of the concept of ‘ramrajya’ for conveying his vision of a decolonised, liberated India, as exemplified through the remarks of Achakka, the old and widowed narrator of Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*:

“He will bring us swaraj, the Mahatma. And we shall be happy. And Rama will be back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharatha will go to meet with them with the worshipped sandal of the Master on his head. And as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers.”⁸

But how far is it possible or even safe to imagine a new nation on the

basis of a mythical imaginative past? For a generation that has witnessed the communal whirlwind unleashed in the name of Ram and ‘Ramraja’ throughout India which even led to Gandhi’s own assassination, such strategies indeed seem fraught with multiple risks because not only do such strategies exclude certain sections of the heterogeneous populace that constitutes a nation, but they are also capable of giving rise to atavistic, revivalist forces that can lead to national disintegration. Unfortunately various historical narratives generated at different points of time have often, consciously or unconsciously, in their attempt to reverse the colonial erasure of Indian history or vilification of the Indians’ past, have sought to romantically glorify certain specific historical ages or periods which have then been set up as ideals towards which all Indians must strive. What such grand narratives of past golden ages tend to ignore are the fissures and pitfalls of those societies which also remained fractured with contradictions and exploitative hierarchies of their own. The glorification of these ages therefore entails the risk of perpetuating those same problems in our own times. In the process the very idea of creating a better future by memorialising the past recoils on itself and darkens that same future which it was supposed to illuminate. This is evident from the way in which the Vedic age was glorified by the Hindu nationalists during the nineteenth century to answer colonialist slander even at the cost of marginalised voices and figures whose very presence was pushed to peripheral shadows.

Therefore Uma Chakravarti, in the essay “Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi”, while analyzing the nationalist glorification of the Vedic age, wrote: “The past itself was a creation of the compulsions of the present and these compulsions determined which elements were highlighted and which receded from the conscious object of concern in historical and semi-historical writings.”⁹ Just as the construct of the Vedic golden age left unanswered questions regarding the status and rights of the Vedic Dasi and others like her, the glorification of the Gupta rule as another golden age¹⁰ also obscured questions pertaining to shudras, women and members of other religious groups belonging to that particular phase of Indian history. These were the subaltern subjects of a bygone age whose voices, in the words of Amitav Ghosh, had vanished into “the crater of a volcano of silence”¹¹.

While the creation of the myth of the Vedic golden age by such eminent figures as Vivekananda and Dayanand was supposed to refute the claims of British historians who had condemned Hindu society, especially for its ill-treatment of women, and to generate national self-esteem¹², the Gupta age too was hailed as a kind of Utopian golden age. In a multi-volume historical work, published only a few years after the independence of India, the authors claimed, in an effusive prose marked by romantic nostalgia that during the

Gupta age, "After five centuries of political disintegration and foreign domination she [India] again reached the high watermark of moral, intellectual and material progress. It was the Golden Age which inspired succeeding generations of Indians and became alike their ideal and despair."¹³ And Samudragupta was held as one of the brightest beacons of this golden age and one of the reasons of his almost unanimously defined brilliance was that his reign was supposed to have marked "a distinct revival of the old glory and influence of the Brahminical religion"¹⁴. Such idealisations were part of a rather communal historiography which sought to, in the words of Romila Thapar, "to project an ideal Hindu society in the past and attribute the ills of India to the coming of 'Muslims'"¹⁵. Such exclusionary narratives, backed by a retrogressive revivalism, are integral to the processes of 'postcolonial subalternization' prevalent in India and they offer, according to Romila Thapar 'intellectual justification'¹⁶ for modern communalism. It is therefore necessary to expose these myths for what they are to ensure that history's bitter truths do not repeat themselves. If history entails "an ongoing reassessment of the past that facilitates a perception of the present and the future"¹⁷ then such evaluations become integral for our vision of a better present and future.

And this is precisely the kind of evaluation that Utpal Dutt sought to offer. Throughout his life Utpal Dutt, in one play after another has not only championed the cause of the oppressed but has systematically undermined dominant narratives to reveal the layers of exploitation and oppression which have remained hidden beneath veneers of glory and has sought to represent those whose perspectives had been erased from official records. In the process he too had devoted himself to the task of combating 'elitist historiography' and developing an 'alternative discourse'¹⁸ that Subaltern historians like Ranajit Guha have been talking about. He had himself claimed that "It will be our endeavour to rediscover the history which has been distorted and raped by the hirelings of the bourgeois..."¹⁹ And one of the methods that he frequently used to achieve this goal was to dramatise particular instances of subaltern action in the past, which were either ignored or omitted by dominant narratives, and use them to inspire the masses to rise up against their contemporary oppressors. And Dutt knew quite well that one of the ways in which the ruling bourgeoisie consolidates its power is through the use of religion which is also used during communal riots to keep the people oblivious of greater dangers and to reduce their powers by infusing hatred among each other. Therefore, in an article for the Ospal magazine of Cuba, Dutt wrote:

"The cultural offensive unleashed by such a ruling class must necessarily be equally rank and gross in nature. Religious obscurantism and open and shameless opposition to the sciences have been their principal platform...But

since 1962 especially, this medieval necromancy has developed new features, the principal being a brazen aggressiveness towards all our neighbours and the creation of a myth that India taught the world civilisation and peace. It is a Hindu myth, sustained by almost idiotic fictions written by their hired agents who attribute all good things of the world [including the Taj Mahal] to our Hindu ancestors.”²⁰

In a lecture delivered at Lancaster, during an international drama conference and workshop (from 5th-9th April 1990), Dutt further stressed this point and elaborated through a number of contemporary examples from India’s political history, how the ruling classes, despite the facade of secular democracy, have repeatedly used fundamentalist jargon to serve electoral purposes and have directly and indirectly aided communal carnage to rupture proletarian unity and serve their vested interests²¹. Written in 1971, *Hunting the Sun*, which was originally a jatra, voices Dutt’s concern and outrage regarding the menace of this revivalist, right-wing nationalism whose consequences have been all too glaringly prominent for us. Relying on what Walter Benjamin called ‘revolutionary nostalgia’²², which offers, to quote Terry Eagleton, a “revolutionary recollection of the unjustly quelled”²³, Utpal Dutt’s *Hunting the Sun*²⁴ powerfully deconstructs the glory of Samudragupta to expose his kingdom as a source of dehumanizing Brahminical tyranny directed alike against Shudra slaves and dissenting Buddhists and in the process becomes a prophetic caveat against the spectre of fundamentalism that would engulf the nation in the course of the next two decades.

The nature of this dehumanizing tyranny becomes evident from the very beginning, as we are presented with the sordid reality of Shudra slavery through the auctioning of Madhukarika and Veerak, two shudra slaves. Suryavarma’s remark, “Slave and beast are similar animal”(p 3), explicitly indicates the kind of denigration and humiliation to which the shudras were subjected and this will become all the more glaring later on when the two would be branded like cattle in accordance with the queen’s command. Noted historian D.N. Jha has pointed out how the shudras generally “continued to be employed as hired labour and slaves”²⁵ and the treatment they receive in the play is in accordance with the entrenched hostility towards them as revealed by some of Manu’s severe punitive laws. And obviously the situation was even worse for shudra women since, as Spivak explains, ‘the subaltern as woman is even more deeply in the shadow’²⁶. Jha also points out how shudra maid-servants or ‘vrishali’, according to Patanjali, were used for the pleasures of the upper classes²⁷.

This particular aspect is explicitly exemplified through the public stripping of Madhukarika, ostensibly for the purposes of financial assessment, which also exposes the growing commodification of women despite their idealization

in art and literature. Unlike the well-born Draupadi, who is saved from public humiliation by Dharma or Sustaining Law, Madhukarika is forced to cry out: "You are cannibals! You have banished dharma from the land" (p 3)! Her agony not only serves to expose the unrecognised truths of a supposedly golden age but even connects her with the modern times where we still keep hearing reports of women being paraded naked for numerous reasons across the land²⁸. The exploitation of women becomes all the more prominent from Hayagreeva's accounts of his own insatiable lust, to satisfy which each night a woman is summoned at his house. What is even more terrifying is the fact that he had killed his chariot-driver simply because he had dared to look at one of the women summoned by his master. Just as Velutha, in *The God of Small Things* is killed for an illicit affair²⁹, the unnamed driver in the play dies for what was considered an illicit glance. The difference is one of degree and not kind.

Gohil, another shudra slave, would have shared the same fate had it not been for the timely intervention of Indrani, a Buddhist nun, who non-violently resists the Brahminical orthodoxy of Samudragupta's reign and becomes a symbol of subaltern assertion. Following the pattern of Brecht's *Galileo*³⁰ Dutt presents as the core of this play a conflict between religious orthodoxy and scientific truth and it is through Indrani and Kalhan, the two Buddhists, that this truth is championed. Despite the threats and warnings from Brahminical authorities both Indrani and Kalhan refuse to accept that the earth is flat and continue to assert that it is round. It is through the dramatization of this struggle that the exploitative structures of the times are unearthed and the resistance mounted by the subalterns is described. The dauntless temper of Indrani and her commitment to truth is indeed an example of this resistance while the High Priest's insistence on imprisoning her, because she dared to read the holy texts despite being a shudra, is indicative of the marginalization faced by shudras. And this marginalization is even sanctioned by citing the case of Shambuk, in the *Ramayana*, who was killed³¹, according to one of the many versions³², by Rama for reading the holy texts. Religion, literature and statecraft thus collude and combine to ensure maximum disempowerment of the shudras.

Shambuk's death is, in fact, indicative of the kind of violence that was used to maintain the hierarchies of class and caste and this violence becomes all the more explicit through the excruciating torture to which Indrani is subjected after she is imprisoned by the royal authorities. She is fixed onto a wheel which is turned from time to time in order to compel her to recant. The spectacle becomes almost a Foucauldian "gloomy festival of punishment"³³ and exemplifies the barbaric brutality of the regime. Such a spectacle invariably unmasks the truth behind the supposedly "versatile genius"³⁴ of Samudragupta. In fact, the self-proclaimed 'Kabiraj'³⁵ is shown to be a Nero-esque sadist

who nonchalantly poeticizes the relentless persecution of Indrani and even seeks to use her screams as sources of inspiration. This again highlights the truth of Walter Benjamin's famous assertion, that "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism."³⁶ This is also emphasised by the persistently sarcastic remarks of Dardura, the court jester, who as a shudra slave, is well aware of the evils of the empire. Therefore he states: "Samudra means the sea. I don't think you have lived up to that name. Pond or cesspool would be more fitting names."(p. 6).

As the subversive truth-teller Dardura obviously reminds us of Shakespearean fools and his caustic remark—"Every stone in this accursed house is plastered with sin" (p 6)—may be said to represent a subaltern voice that implodes the myth of the golden age. Through characters such as these Dutt effects an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges"³⁷ which operates, in the words of Terry Eagleton, "as a deconstructive force within hegemonic ideologies of history"³⁸. Such ideologies are all the more actively challenged through the actual rebellion inspired by Kalhan and led by Gohil. D. N. Jha notes that "Most shudras seethed in discontent. It is not unlikely that they often turned against Brahmins and other higher castes and caused tensions in society."³⁹ Dutt dramatises this very possibility and Kalhan therefore remarks—"In Ayodhya alone they have kept in chain a hundred thousand slaves. Let those slaves shatter their chains and bring down this state erected on sin." (p. 15).

The need for such an uprising becomes all the more evident when Hayagreeva, in accordance with the royal decree, raids Kalhan's ashram and ends up burning the books and smashing the instruments. Such a typically fascist act is deliberately implanted in the text, I believe, to expose the link between the fascist regime of Hitler and the emerging Hindu fundamentalism led by Golwalkar and others who openly declared their reverence for Hitler⁴⁰. Therefore when Kalhan denounces the "barbarity perpetrated by a fiendishly Hindu empire" (p. 16) his words transcend the specific historical context and reach out to our times & warn us against the perils of Hindu fundamentalism which has also led to various attacks against artists and intellectuals as well as associated acts of vandalism. Kalhan's outrage may even be seen, in today's context, as a progressive denunciation of that retrograde revivalism which has also led to the introduction of astrology and vastushastra as academic disciplines approved by the UGC⁴¹. Dutt's play, thus, not only offers a deconstruction of communally motivated historiography but also warns against lamentable outcomes of communal politics with which we have become all too familiar. By unmasking the myth of a particular golden age, Dutt also succeeds in disclosing the ruinous nature of aggressive Hindu revivalism, the

violent consequences of which require no repetition. It is a similar brand of violence that leads to Indrani's mauling by a mad elephant as well as the cutting off of Kalhan's tongue which literally silences the subaltern.

However, traces of such suppressed knowledges keep recurring in the form of counter-hegemonic thought to disrupt and displace hegemonic authority. Indrani instructs Veerak to collect and flee with some books through which Kalhans ideas will live on and according to Madhukarika "dispel the darkness of the mind."(p 24) The play may itself operate as one of such enlightening texts which not only serves to deconstruct revivalist visions of the past but in the light of such deconstruction also helps us to recognise and confront the challenges of the present. A committed author as ever, Dutt not only offers illuminating insights into the past but prophetically proclaims the perils that will plague the nation's future. I would like to end by reminding the readers the significance, in this context, of Eliot's famous lines⁴².

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past. (1-3)

Notes

- An earlier version of this paper was read at the 5th annual conference of the Indian Society for Theatre Research on 'Language(s) of Theatre' from 28-30th January, 2009 held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
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2. Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, (New Delhi: Peacock Books, 2000). p 457.
3. Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden", <http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/kipling/white_mans_burden.html>. Accessed on 1st August, 2009.
4. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). p 170
5. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, (London: Routledge, 1996). p 107.
6. Quoted in Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia, (New Delhi: OUP, 2006). p. 111.
7. Aime Cesaire, "Discourse on Colonialism" in Postcolonial Criticism, ed. Bart Moore-Gilbert, Gareth Stanton and Willy Maley (London: Longman, 1997) p. 82.



8. Raja Rao, *Kanthapura*, (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2005). p 189.
9. Uma Chakraborty, "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi", *A South Asian Nationalism Reader* ed. Sayantan Dasgupta. (Delhi: Worldview, 2007) p. 295.
10. R. C. Majumdar et al, *The History and Culture of the Indian People Vol.3* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962) p. 16.
11. Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2006) p. 230.
12. Uma Chakraborty, "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi", *A South Asian Nationalism Reader* ed. Sayantan Dasgupta. (Delhi: Worldview, 2007) pp. 274-95.
13. R. C. Majumdar et al, *The History and Culture of the Indian People Vol.3* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962) p. 16.
14. R. C. Majumdar et al, *The History and Culture of the Indian People Vol.3* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962) p. 15.
15. Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia, Bipan Chanda, *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*. (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969) p. 1.
16. Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia, Bipan Chanda, *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*. (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1969) p. 1.
17. Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, (London: Routledge, 1996). p 106.
18. Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India", *Subaltern Studies 1: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1982). p. 7.
19. Utpal Dutt, *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre*, (Kolkata: M.C Sarkar and Sons, 1982). p. 61.
20. Utpal Dutt, "Theatre as Weapon of Revolution", *Utpal Dutt: A Comprehensive Observation*, ed. Nripendra Saha, (Kolkata: Utpal Dutt Drama Festival Committee, 2005). p. 122.
21. Utpal Dutt, "Indian Theatre and Ideology", *Utpal Dutt. A Comprehensive Observation*, ed. Nripendra Saha, (Kolkata: Utpal Dutt Drama Festival Committee, 2005). p. 79-89.
22. Cited by Terry Eagleton, *Against The Grain* (London: Verso, 1986) p.137.
23. Eagleton, p. 137.
24. Utpal Dutt, "Hunting the Sun." *Enact* Aug.-Sept. 1972.
25. D. N. Jha, *Ancient India in Historical Outline. Rev. ed*, (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999) p. 130.
26. Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak", *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. (London & New York: Routledge, 1997) p. 28.
27. Jha, p. 130.

28. A Google search revealed 4500 entries dealing with such incidents.
<<http://www.google.com/search?sourceid=navclient&ie=UTF-8&rls=GGLG,GGLG:2008-29,GGLG:en&q=dalit+woman+paraded+naked>>
14th Jan, 2009.
29. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*. (New York: Random, 1997.)
30. Bertolt Brecht, *Galileo*, trans Charles Laughton (New York: Grove Press, 1994).
31. Krittibash, *Ramayana* (Kolkata: Dey's Publishing, 2000) pp. 497-98.
32. A. K. Ramanujan, "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation", *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan*, ed. Vinay Dharwadkar. (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999) pp. 131-160.
33. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) p. 8.
34. Quoted from Harishena's "Allahabad Prasasti" by H.C.Ray Chaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India. 5th ed.* (Kolkata: University of Calcutta, 1950). p. 549.
35. R.C. Majumdar, H. C. Ray Chaudhuri, Kalikinkar Datta, *An Advanced History of India. 4th ed.* (Chennai: Macmillan, 1986) p. 200.
36. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philiosophy of History, VII", *Reading the Past*, ed. Tamsin Spargo (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2000) p. 121.
37. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, trans. Colin Gordon et.al (New York: Pantheon, 1980) pp. 81-82.
38. Eagleton, p. 137.
39. Jha, p. 130.
40. Debu Dattagupta, *Ak Kadam Egiye* (Kolkata: Manoranjan Saha, 1993) pp 89-94.
41. Kushal Siddhanta, "Some Questions Concerning The UGC Course in Astrology" from *Breakthrough*, November 2001, 16th Jan, 2009. <www.ee.iitkgp.ernet.in/soumitro/bt/archives/astrology.pdf>
42. T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1977) p. 13.

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Resisting Revivalism: Utpal Dutt's Hunting the Sun and the Rediscovery of History

- Saha, Nripendra ed. *Utpal Dutt: A Comprehensive Observation.* ed, Nripendra Saha, Kolkata: Utpal Dutt Drama Festival Committee, 2005
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History and Hysteria—Reshaping Shakespeare in Kalyan Ray's *Eastwords*

Sibendu Chakraborty

Kalyan Ray's¹ *Eastwords*, tells a tale woven in the histrionic maze of memory and forgetfulness. The gaps and fragmentations that threaten the post-colonial readings of historiography do not leave us recolonized or decolonized .The title of the novel as it suggests, an overt oriental feasting on tales told and retold in the '*Pandavani*' tradition is very ironical in its very instability. Sheikh Piru /the narrator, blurts out towards the very end of the novel: tales "I edged you away from my tale. Now she was edging me away from mine. Is this what happens to all the tales of the world?". (252) This is where I propose to show the metamorphosis of facts into fantasy, plots into episodes and history into hysteria. While reshaping *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in context of an oriental discourse, Ray traces the nature of fragmentation that alienates the prospect of finding a unified oriental consciousness. Pakhee's 'flutterfly' into that if Puck and Ariel is a distinctive case in point as it complicates Ray's project of ensuring freedom for Sukumari's first son. "What I did know is that I wanted to be free and I knew that it was a dangerous knowledge." (101) Pakhee can become Puck only by dissembling Oberon or fictionalizing his own captivity. Sheikh Piru, the oriental Tyresius whose visionary consciousness spans the entire novel also burns with an ardent desire to be a part of the narrative by stringing together episodes of East and West. He is dauntless in his plot-making but merely ends up being a diminutive outsider. Still 'Tempus Fugit' (time flies) and the narrator's concern to swap between East and West is dappled with spots of significant time.

The discourse of antagonism between an imperialist tradition on one hand, and a resistance tradition on the other,² is brilliantly foregrounded in an attempt at decolonizing the mind. Ngugi wa Thiongo writes in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* that the cultural bomb is instrumental in annihilating "a peoples belief in their names, in their languages" (3). But neither Pakhee nor Kalyan can segregate themselves' from Puck or Caliban. The unidirectional seepage of imperial rule from West to East is a story of history metamorphosing into hysteria. The narrator asks, "Why did they come from their cold western coasts with incomplete maps, cannons, desperation and Christianity to the East?" (56). We are reminded of T.S. Eliot's "Gerontion"³:

Think now

History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities. (33-36)

History thus gets mythical and subsumes itself in the rich, inexplicable incarnation of Abhiram, Pandey, Meera and Kalyan.

Hysteria as a neurotic disorder is characterized by a wide variety of somatic and mental symptoms resulting from dissociation, typically beginning during adolescence or early adulthood and occurring more commonly in women than men. The spatial and chronological coordinates in *Eastwords* are intertwined in an intricate fabrication of mythical and pseudo-historical reality. Thus the Lord Clive episode is subtly linked with the colonizer's motive of sowing the seed of doubt and unwanted freedom in the mind of Harilal. The peripatetic return of Ariel is culminated in his existential role as a 'spy' who finds him unaffected "at the stroke of midnight in the first moments of August 15, 1947" (249). The text is rife with occasions of arbitrary, inexplicable display of fear and anger which account for the overabundance of emotion and restlessness. Abhimarm's role as a colonizer of human body and soul is projected in terms of uncontrolled, eccentric display of anger. The concept of dissociation, a process whereby specific internal mental contents (memories, ideas, feelings, perceptions) are lost to conscious awareness and become unavailable to voluntary call is central to an understanding of the genesis of hysterical symptoms. Though unconscious, these mental contents can be recovered under special circumstances (e.g. in dreams or a hypnotic trance). Thus Sukumari "felt drunk, in the growing heat of summer, wobbly on her legs, and she spent hours looking at the birds hovering about the treetops in the tangled woods that teetered on the edge of the wide river" (6)

Viewing Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as a site of 'licensed carnival' can be contradicted by Barbara Freedman's notion of holding this play as "[...] openly celebrating the shaping vision of an aristocratic ideology [...] At the same time the play panders to an aristocratic ideology by wreaking comic punishment on all those who defy the prince's legislation of desire" (155).⁴ Kalyan Ray's *Eastwords* deals with this politics of assuring the official seal in a kaleidoscopic pattern of swapping between East and West. The issue of colonialism is thus discussed at length referring to its associations with the discourse of appetite. Thus Sheikh Piru comments: "All the wealth of the land is devoured; digested, and then the colon takes care of the rest thus, colonization." (136) Ray's fiction, thus does not fail to show a movement from east to west, i.e. from freedom to slavery; from homeland to exile and back to the homeland.

The comingling of facts and fantasy reduces the plots of *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into episodic reincarnations of hysterical abundance. This is where sexuality serves as a potent subtext by subverting the role of 'Queen of Nipples' over that of Naples. Kalyan's metamorphosis into Caliban again back to Kalyan is an evidence of appropriation where domestic happiness is briefly triumphed over the alien motive of rootlessness. Similarly, Prospero's ill-directed motive of debasing Caliban by associating him with Sycorax seems to mix facts and fantasy to uphold the banner of colonization by designating the 'other' as subhuman and irrational. The equation of psychosomatic excesses which form the subtext of *Eastwords* is inimitably related to the psychomachea of Sukumari, whose strategic subaltern stance in the novel follows a trajectory of fullness, overabundance, enervation and recovery. The geography of female sexuality is explored and counter pointed against Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's take on the third world woman's recuperation as accentuated by a state of enervation and exhaustion, having been robbed of offspring. The issue of "clitoral orgasm" (Spivak 90) is revisited with an ironical notion of distancing from the western conception of womanhood unlike that of the French feminists. A subtle, complex web of association links clitoridectomy with the robbing of one's own offspring. Clitoridectomy refers to the symbolic effacement of woman's non-reproductive sexual desire as a way of reestablishing patriarchal dominance. Spivak writes in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*: "Investigation of the effacement of clitoris—where clitoridectomy is a metonym for women's definition as 'legal object as subject of reproduction'-would persistently seek to de-normalize uterine social organization" (157). The narrator problematises this element of female sexuality in *Eastwords* where he goes on to narrate:

[...] Oberon did a slow pirouette, floated above Sukumari and she felt him entering—an infinite tenderness-within her, and she closed her eyes and felt a song like a lark's forming in her mouth, felt the open curve of her womb, and when she opened her eyes, she saw nothing but a startling darkness and bats of yellow shadow skitter and scatter, felt the rising heat on her sweltering underbelly and knew she been closer to the sun than ever before and felt Oberon writhe upon her within her arms, felt the slow tandemshudders in their loins in the banking glide on the wide sweeping fall to the ocean far below. 'My love, my love, my love,' she said as they floated down in slow contended circles above the water. (33)

The French feminist thinker's notion of upholding the female sexual orgasm as the symbolic political resistance against 'the patriarchal dominance is underplayed by the intrusion of yet another threat, that of losing the child at the altar of male diplomacy. Thus Sukumari cries out: "Without the child

I shall die" (80). The percussion of pain that tears through Sukumari's heart offers a critical and situated counterpoint to the universal valorization of sexual satisfaction as a space for women's embodied resistance and political struggle by some French feminists.

Coming back to the theme of memory and forgetfulness, it can be said that all phenomenon of conversion and dissociative hysteria may be viewed as the effects of either the dissociation itself or the eruption into consciousness of portions of the dissociated mental contents of varying degrees of complexity. Dissociation, thus may serve as a psychological defense by providing a mechanism for banishing unpleasant, painful and anxiety-provoking mental contents from consciousness. Thus Puck says: "I was born in darkness, a moving darkness in which I rolled. More than that I do not remember." (91). The sense of loss is concealed behind his sprightly mischief which he considers to be his 'magic'. It hurts Puck to think of his gift of flight being used to serve the self-aggrandizing motive of Oberon. Again Sukumari loses all desire of surrendering herself to the lures of flight as it reminds her of Pakhee. The punishment that Oberon meted out to Puck for his disobedience can be seen in the linguistic level where the morpheme, "Puck" gets reduced to phonemic '/p/' , which acts out the role of a bare signifier robbed of its content. The notion of anonymity which King Oberon thrusts upon Puck colonizes his freewill and imprisoned him in the "vellum-bound letter infested darkness" (136). The sudden disappearance of memory in the void of momentary existence leaves the phoneme '/p/' alone in search of a renewed nomenclature.

The stories of colonial possession and dispossession on one side and the wilful forgetfulness brought about to erase the scar of loss on the other, the framing and reframing of tales into episodic clusters on the bank of the Ganges and unwinding in some alien shores, are specimens of a structure constituting itself to be displaced in an array of innumerable referential significations. In *Eastwords*, we can trace an abrupt break in the story-telling mode as Sukumari silences Sheikh Piru and edges herself into the centre of discourse having found a voice of her own. So the tradition of relating stories gets enmeshed with the narrator's vision of shaping and reshaping the contours of perception. "We must tell our own tales."(252)- Says Sukumari, perhaps unconsciously appropriating the role of Teejan Bai as she desires to oft for the *Kapalik*⁵ style leaving the *Vedmati* style aside. The elements of improvisation which characterizes her new mode of narration ushers in the prospect of yet another string of tales which bind history, myth and reality reviewed from a Feminist perspective.

Kalyan Ray's *Eastwords* appropriates a magic realist's method of poeticizing the history of colonization against a backdrop of Shakespearian richness of

imagination and portrayal. What should not be overlooked is his postcolonial position in tying up bits and pieces of historical remnants in a desired array of implications which can not possibly do away with the bizarre, the inexplicable and imaginary. A magic realist text thus may be said to be preoccupied in denaturalizing the real or naturalizing the marvelous. An instance of naturalizing the marvelous can be traced quite early in *Eastwords* when Joga, the medicine man turns up to treat Sukumari's severely injured husband. Ray writes:

Her husband had died when she was three months pregnant. He had been cut by a scythe on the last day of the harvest. His hand has swelled, puce, purple, black, and screamed with the obligato of pain. Joga, the medicine man, had come from the next village, but it was already too late. The hand had swollen to the size of his thigh. The man had died in mid-groan. Joga, cheated of his fee, was going to back something, so he slit open the swollen hand to collect the poison in a gourd, but he staggered back when he saw that through the jagged incision came a welter of wings as from a broken hive, splendidly purple and puce, and flew away from the rotten limb that now lay deflated like an empty waterskin. Joga sat back astonished on his ochre-cloth-swaddled ample arse, his mouth open, an unspoken *Arre baap re baap!* hovering unsaid upon his tongue, when he felt the villagers' eyes on him. A medicine man must never look flabbergasted. (5)

W. B. Faris in *Ordinary Enchantments* takes a global perspective, mapping out the transnational literary links between a great range of texts, showing the "cultural work" that magical realism does, and claiming it as "perhaps the most important contemporary trend in international fiction" (1). This element of cultural connotation is well worked into the text by compressing and streamlining of Indian history. Thus the history of colonization is recounted in a personal style, narrativizing the postcolonial anxiety of the colonizers. We find Lord Clive striking an intimate conversation with Harilal which goes as follows:

‘Did you know I almost died when I was sailing to India to work for the East India Company?’ Clive said. ‘There was an Atlantic tempest when I sailed in the March of 1743, headed for the East. The storm tore the sails and cracked the mast, and the ship rolled in the crazy waves. I was shaken loose by a wave and fell from the poop. I sank and rose, the frothy waves slapped at me, I sank and rose and was about to sink again once and for all. But the captain had seen me and flung a rope with a tied bucket at me. I clung to the bucket. My fingerjoints cracked in the cold and strain and the turbulence of the vexed waters. The sailors managed to pull up the rope and I clung

to the bucket, brought me up, aye, brought me up to the deck like Atlantic fish.'

'When they lay me down on the slippery deck', Clive mused, 'I wept with anguish for I had lost my shoes with silver buckles on them.' He put another morsel of sweet halwa in his mouth. 'They are the only precious things I owned. What would my father say! Oh, I feared my father!' (246).

Magic Realism surpasses the literary realism by recognizing the magic inherent in reality. This is a strategy which Zamora and Faris admit, is a simple matter of the most complicated sort.⁶ Thus magic is glimpsed within the corpus of the ordinary. Thus the cognition of the real is defamiliarized. It expands, shifts, transforms to juxtapose elements normally considered opposite-life and death, walking and dreaming, civilized and wild, male and female, mind and body. Thus magic gets cognized as ordinary, admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Zamora and Faris in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* also hold that:

Magical realist texts are subversive: in their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial culture, and, increasingly to women. Hallucinatory scenes and events, fantastic/phantasmagoric characters are used in several of the magical realist works discussed here to indict recent political and cultural perversions. History is inscribed, often in details, but in such a way that actual events and existing institutions are not always privileged and are certainly not limiting: historical narrative is no longer chronicle but clairvoyance. (6)

Linda Hutcheon's postmodern perspectives can be discerned with respect to Ray's *Eastwords* as it foregrounds characters taken both from Indian political and cultural history and western literary and cultural repertoire. Hutcheon in "Circling the Downspout of Empire" writes:

The formal technique of "magic realism" (with its characteristic mixing of the fantastic and the realist) has been singled out by many critics as one of the points of conjunction of postmodernism and post-colonialism. Its challenges to genre distinctions and to the conventions of realism are certainly part of the project of both enterprises. [...] Thus it becomes part of the dialogue with history that both postmodernism and post-colonialism undertake. After modernism's ahistorical rejection of the burden of the past, postmodern art has sought self-consciously (and often even parodically) to reconstruct its relationship to what came before; similarly, after that imposition of an imperial culture and that truncated indigenous history which colonialism has meant to many nations, post-colonial literatures are also negotiating (often parodically)

the once tyrannical weight of colonial history in conjunction with the revalued local past. (131-132)

Eastwords in negotiating a dialogue with history, straddles both the postcolonial and postmodern terrain by framing and reframing, structuring and restructuring the histories and myths, fantasies and facts, dichotomies and dialectics. The oriental role of Sheikh Piru is both political and conjectural. In appropriating the role of an Eastern-Shakespeare, he subtly establishes his right in the art of framing narratives and that of parodying the West's monopoly in the trade. The West's claim to master-narratives is parodied in an oriental richness of abundance and free play of meanings. Thus Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, get relocated in the Eastern mind as a site of radical rejection of colonial authority. The postcolonial anxiety⁶ traceable in the text is a marker of the postmodern irony which deconstructs the colonial authority with magical realist's mini-narratives. Thus Kalyan, Pakhee, Sukumari, Sheikh Piru, become part of an ever-expanding community whose own perspectives of narrativizing history, myths, cultures, and folktales are recognized in the text.

Kalyan Ray's ironical turn of mind brings home the elusive nature of blaming it all upon "williambaba" what he is unable to account for. But aren't we afraid of getting decolonized or re-colonized? If not, the novel would well have been named 'East'. Sheikh Piru, who has Macaulay for his father and who is fond of thinking himself as Shakespeare's alter ego finally finds Harilal at "2, Sambhunath Pandit Street in Calcutta in an abandoned office of the defunct Indian National Congress Party."(249) Don't you think Ray is indirectly hinting at Subhas Chandra Bose's final flight from his residence at Sambhunath Pandit Street only to contrast it with the seemingly ineffectual mental flight of Harilal who once was Pakhee. As an oriental reader Ray's novel, I find myself in a no man's land between that of knowledge and wilful forgetfulness.

[This is a revised version of a paper presented in The World Shakespeare Conference held in Kolkata between 31st December 2006 and 2nd January, 2007.]

Notes :

1. Kalyan Ray was exposed to a multitude of cultures and experiences, as he grew up and educated in Calcutta, and now lives in both India and the US. He has worked as a taxi driver in Calcutta, as a nurse's assistant in New York, Professor of Literature in New Jersey and visiting Professor in the Philippines. In his debut novel, *Eastwords* he uses the Pandavani narrative technique used by Teejan Bai. Refusing to be bowed by the literary dictations of the West, he takes the liberty

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of weaving Shakespearean characters into his story and at one-point even questions the authenticity of the Bard's stories. His book has already found its way into the curriculum of popular culture studies at MIT in the US.

2. See Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* for a detailed analysis of the political and ideological tussle between the imperialist tradition and the indigenous one. This is very relevant in the context of foregrounding the erosion of native values and cultural connotations at the altar of imperialist ideologies and discourse.
3. See T.S. Eliot, *The Complete Plays and Poems of T.S. Eliot*. London: Faber and Faber, 1971 for the entire poem.
4. See Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991 for details.
5. Kalyan Ray has used the *Pandavani* style of depiction in his narrative which was popularized by Teejan Bai. It is a mode of singing and enacting ballads of the *Pandavas* in the fiery *Chattishgarhi* tradition. Teejan Bai took to the *Kapalik* style of *Pandavani*, where the narrator depicts scenes from the epic and improvises consistently. Since then the *Vedmati* style, where the performer sits and narrates the story was much in vogue.⁶
6. See "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism" in Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* for details regarding the proliferation of colonial anxiety.

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Refutation of the Archeology of Knowledge: A Comparative study of Partha Chatterjee's *A Princely Imposter?* and John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman.*

Arpa Ghosh

Partha Chatterjee's *A Princely Imposter?: the Strange and Universal History of the Kumar of Bhawal* (published 2002) and four years later with a new subtitle *A Princely Imposter? The Kumar of Bhawal & the Secret History of Indian Nationalism*¹ and John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (published 1969)² are texts set in the age of Empire. Chatterjee's text is set in early twentieth century undivided Bengal (the Bhawal sanyasi case stretched from 1921 to 1946). Fowles' novel is set in 1867 Victorian England. Both texts are critiques of an English empire that sought to use knowledge as power in order to categorize, tabulate and document relentlessly the causes, motives and psychological complexities of human behaviour and through this form of documentation and categorization gain control over subject peoples.

In both texts, innumerable transcripts and treatises related to medical reports, prison records, police reports, hearsay, contemporary public and private responses in the form of diary writing, letters, poems and ballads, newspaper articles, editorials and judicial records are interconnected in a complicated mesh of reference and cross reference in an effort to pin down the identities of key subjects. In both texts important psychic elements elude documentation to the end. In *A Princely Imposter?* the true identity of Bhawal sanyasi³, (who returned twelve years after his alleged 'death' to reclaim his property, did the rounds of the courts for a period of 25 years, finally won his case, and survived less than a month to celebrate his victory) and the motives behind the testimony of Jyotirmayi, the sister and Bibhabati the wife remain ambiguous till the end in spite of the mountains of evidence presented by both sides to the four judges over a period of 25 years.

In *The Princely Imposter?* Chatterjee recounts the famous return in 1921 of the second kumar of the Bhawals, a zamindari family in early nineteenth century Bengal, to claim his property from the British. His family had given him up for dead. But when twelve years later a nagasanyasi returned claiming to be the second kumar, an interesting identity puzzle became food for raging speculation and scandal.

In 1909 the second kumar of Bhawal, Ramendra Narayan Roy's body was

'cremated' in Darjeeling, a hill station in Bengal, where accompanied by wife Bibhabati, brother-in-law Satyendra, family doctor Ashutosh Dasgupta and a retinue of twenty-one servants, he had gone to cure a severe bout of syphilis. Twelve years later a holy man returned to the zamindari of Bhawal which in the meantime had passed into British hands due to the absence of a male heir, to claim that he is the second kumar returned from the dead. Jyotirmayi, the widowed, elder sister of the kumars and the grand matriarch of the Bhawal household was convinced from the start about the holy man's identity. Jyotirmayi subsequently became the chief witness of the plaintiff's case. The defendant of the case that dragged on for more than two decades, was Satyendranath, Ramnedranath's brother-in-law who had in the meantime upgraded his status with his 'widowed' sister's inheritance. The chief witness of the defence was significantly the second kumar's widow Bibhabati.

In John Fowles' novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* the chameleon-like persona of the heroine Sarah Woodruff—unmarried but not virginal, penurious but educated, rebellious yet strangely quiescent in exploitative sexual relations—and her motives for attracting and later repelling the hero Charles Smithson, remain till the end enigmatic and unfathomable. As an educated, perceptive, penurious spinster Sarah refuses to be contained in any of the categories so helpfully provided by the psychological ethnographers and cartographers of Victorian society. She becomes a site to be contended for, controlled, managed and conquered by patriarchal Victorian society that manifests itself intellectually and economically in the personas of the Darwinian hero, Charles Smithson a man ousted from the landed gentry and yet to find his niche in the intellectual circles of London, representative of both, the Darwinian psychologist Dr Grogan, a specialist in diseased female psychology, the propertied dowager Mrs Poulteney, a female power-broker of patriarchy, and an intrusive Thackeray-like narrator who discusses and attempts to provide motives behind Sarah's unpredictable actions. The exertions of all these controlling agents prove abortive and the identity of Sarah spills over the neatly segmented categories of Victorian womanhood, sanity, abnormality and so on.

In *A Princely Imposter?* the sanyasi wins the case, yet all the tests of truth applied to establish his identity fail to do so conclusively. Rather the plaintiff's victory in three courts and defeat in one betoken the shifting plane of British-India relations. The British judge Lodge's verdict against the plaintiff casts light on the judge's colonial arrogance and eagerness to see British interests served on Indian soil. The other British judge Costello's favourable judgement passed against the background of a Second World War torn Britain signifies a gradual withdrawal of British official agencies from what was increasingly being viewed as a complicated internal affair of a remote part of a young

nation ready to take the reins of its destiny in its own hands. In both judgments, national interests take priority over the ontological question of the actual identity of the sanyasi.

Fowles' and Chatterjee's texts are postmodern and postcolonial rebuttals of the mammoth archeology of knowledge of human motives and psychology (borrowing a Foucaultian term) that Victorian English colonizer culture insisted on building up in order to know, control and manage its subjects. The representation of women, Indian in Chatterjee's text and English in Fowles', are sites riddled with questions, controversies and ambiguities designating them as passive subjects in a predominantly male colonizer culture. Both Fowles and Chatterjee highlight with urbane irony two significant points: one, the value of unrepresented, oral, insider's knowledge as counterpoint to detailed documented, theoretical knowledge; and two, the value of the local and regional as counterpoint to the universal and general. In both texts silence on key issues speaks louder than words. In the Victorian omniscient narrative, incongruities and discrepancies are sought to be smoothed out in the narrator's endeavour to construct a seamless, linear narrative moving towards the well-etched teleological culmination of marriage or death. The pastiche, on the contrary, polyphonic, self-reflexive, and sensitive to textual silence, brings out the difference between the ideological and political pressures pulling the text in diverse directions and the ultimate elusiveness of textual subjects who, since they are known only by their actions in limited blocks of time and space, can never be known completely.

Partha Chatterjee writes from the perspective of the postcolonial Indian historian and with fine irony uses a sensational law-suit to focus on the politics of documentation and representation of the colonized by the colonizer to serve different political interests at different time cusps. John Fowles, a native Englishman, writing primarily from a postmodern standpoint, highlights the politics of documentation and representation of 'normal' and 'abnormal' female behaviour in the Victorian times. Deliberately choosing a theme having all the components of a Victorian classic realist novel, and harnessing it to a postmodern narrative technique, Fowles examines and reveals the essential artifice of the realist text. The multiple endings of the novel draw attention to suppressed possibilities and polyphonic voices.

A Princely Imposter? is a collage-like reconstruction of an actual lawsuit fought in the courts of undivided Bengal between 1925 and 1946 using historical methods, but also including the popular literature of the period that spawned in reaction to the Bhawal case.⁴ Fowles narrates a fictional love triangle set in the Victorian times but buttresses it with actual medical, prison

and census reports of that time. Though there is a strong technical resemblance between the two texts, the use of the pastiche and the intermixing of fact and fiction, the difference lies in the conclusion. Both narrators are tongue-and-cheek in their conclusions. But Chatterjee, the historian, concludes with the actual verdict of the Privy Council adding Bibhabati's reaction to the plaintiff's immediate death⁵ and his own comments⁶ as hermeneutics that till the end interfere with the linearity of truth about the plaintiff's identity. Chatterjee's text is ostensibly a historical document and should logically conclude with the final verdict of the Bhawal case. But actually the final verdict accompanied by the reactions of Bibhabati (negative) and the narrator (skeptical) form the conclusion, with the second and third 'interpretations' running counter to the verdict. The fact-oriented nature of history thus comes to the readers refracted through the prism of subversive interpretations.

John Fowles with the self-reflexiveness of the postmodern novelist, reveals the unilateral structure of the Victorian master-text to be a sham that maintains its concord by suppressing conflicting voices, contradictory textual movements and possibilities. He also traces the vital connection between history, politics, sociology and art. His exposure is rendered meaningful, at least far more serious than the mere playfulness of an insouciant and maverick postmodernist, by his presentation of documented, historical evidence in the form of numerous prison and medical reports that make it amply clear that multivalent possibilities do exist, and that fiction is a superstructure based on the foundation of economics, politics and individual and collective psychology. At the same time fiction with artistic ruthlessness also seeks to negate and destroy the multiple possibilities at a given historical moment.

Chatterjee shows how the verdicts against the plaintiff, Bhawal sanyasi, in different time periods are pegs on which the two nations—Great Britain and India - hang their nationalist agendas, ultimately arriving at a verdict that is in keeping with the role the British wish to play in Indian politics at a particular historical moment. In Fowles' novel, given the yawning chasm between the subject Sarah Woodruff, and the existing oppressive, bullying, patriarchal modes of interpretation that are bent on curtailing all that is extraneous, excessive and inappropriate in Sarah's identity to make her fit into the neat categories of Victorian womanhood, no satisfactory conclusion is possible. Chatterjee's focus is colonial administration and politics; Fowles', patriarchal ideology and politics. The subjects—a native holy man who claims to be a Bengali aristocrat and a Victorian English woman without a male protector—are both colonized subjects.

The crux of the Bhawal case rests on the opposing verdict of the two major

women characters, Bibhabati the widow who refuses to accept the sanyasi as her husband and who maintains that the second kumar died in 1909 in Darjeeling in front of her eyes, and Jyotirmayi the sister of the kumars who staunchly maintains that the sanyasi is her long lost brother returned from the dead. In the subsequent case that is fought in four stages, the plaintiff, winning the first, second and fourth cases and the defendants winning the third case, two parallel issues emerge. The plaintiff's case hinges on identity: strong physical and psychological correspondences—colour of eyes, scaly feet, traces of syphilitic nodes and scars on his body, uniquely shaped ear lobes - between the young kumar in his twenties and the middle-aged portly sanyasi in his forties. The defendant's case rests on the vital loop-hole in the prosecution's claim that the cremation of the second kumar took place on a stormy night. A large number of witnesses, Birendra Banerjee, personal clerk to the second kumar among them, were summoned by the defense to testify that the funeral took place not in the middle of the night but on a clear, sunny morning in Darjeeling and the body was taken out in a solemn and grand procession at 8.30 in the morning for all to see.⁷ While the plaintiff's side succeeded pointing out significant and weighty physiognomic correspondences and recognition powers in the plaintiff, they could not conclusively disprove the defenses' strong claim that a body was brought out in grand procession from Step Aside, the bungalow in Darjeeling where the Kumar had allegedly breathed his last to be cremated in the morning after the second kumar's death in Darjeeling and not on the night of the death. Moreover the weather reports of that crucial time in Darjeeling showed that there had been no storm or rain at any time before or after the kumar's death.

The Reverend Father Peel of St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, was attached to the meteorological department of the college. From his records, he could say that it had not rained in Darjeeling between May 4 and 11, 1909. He could also say with certainty that if it had not rained between St. Joseph's and St. Paul's Colleges in that time, then it could not have rained between Ghoom, Jalapahar, and the Lebong spur.... He did not agree that there could be rain at any time in one place in Darjeeling without it raining elsewhere; there were certain patterns and a trained and experienced meteorologist could discern them. (211-*PJ*)

This proof questioned the plaintiff's contention that at the time of rain and storm the body of the kumar, mistakenly thought to have expired, and abandoned by the carriers, was almost immediately rescued and taken away by a group of Naga sanyasis with whom the kumar wandered for the next

twelve years. Judge Pannalal Basu and Judge Costello, who passed judgement in favour of the plaintiff focused on the identity issue choosing to remain silent on the time of the cremation, and Judge Lodge who upheld the defendants' contention that the sanyasi was an imposter roundly challenged the identity correspondences. Strangely enough Lodge chose not to highlight or resolve the contentious issue of the rain, storm and cremation time. Rather he concentrated on what he considered to be the unreliable and suspect nature of the plaintiff's reconstructions of the past. The one person to repeatedly bring the cremation time to the limelight is the historian Partha Chatterjee himself who points out that the unsolved hitch about the time of cremation leaves the true identity of the Sanyasi shrouded in mystery. In his conclusion Chatterjee comments how the final verdict of the Privy Council in favour of the plaintiff was actually the tired and battle-weary British nation's withdrawal from the local problems of a far-flung nation increasingly unmanageable in its complexities and nationalist resistance. Indian zamindari land resource, successfully appropriated and consolidated on a regular by the British for two hundred years, was in the forties a burden that a beleaguered and war-torn nation found to be an unwieldy burden. Even in the strongholds of British power like the judicial court there took place a silent transfer of power from the hands of the colonizer to the increasingly capable hands of the colonized. In Chatterjee's words:

It would not be too rash to speculate that had the Bhawal declaratory suit come up in the courts even ten years earlier, say at the time of the defamation suit, no Indian judge would have stood up to the organized assault of the official machinery to defend its prestige;... A decade was a long time in the political history of the colonial world in the twentieth century. Between the 1920s and 1930s...a significant shift had taken place toward the dismantling of the structures of colonial rule from within the institutions of the colonial state.... The colonial judicial system.... was actually taken over by nationalists from within. To answer the historical question about the Bhawal sanyasi case its result is explained by the fact that it represented in microcosm the secret story of the transfer of power in late colonial India, carried out not so much in street demonstrations, prisons, and conference tables but within the interstices of the governmental apparatus itself—slowly, quietly and in the end decisively. (378 - PI)

Chatterjee's contention is that the outcome of the Bhawal sanyasi case was something other than the revelation of the true identity of the sanyasi which was never proved conclusively. The role of Jyotirmayi and Bibhabati is

interesting in this context. The two women, aristocratic widows both, were at polarities about the identity of the sanyasi. Judge Pannalal Basu, himself a Bengali, replete with the insider's knowledge of Bengali social practices, found the two women's opposing standpoints reasonable from the perspective of their social status. The judge stated that Jyotirmoyee's positive standpoint about the sanyasi was not perjury, since a pious widow of an aristocratic Bengali, Brahmin family, was incapable of consciously allowing an impostor to enter the inner quarters of her household even for financial gain, or counterfeit a swooning fit at the sight of the sanyasi (Jyotirmayi had swooned the moment she set eyes on the sanyasi). Bibhabati's dogged rejection of the sanyasi as her husband was explained by Pannalal Basu as a Hindu, aristocratic widow's inability to return to the life of a married woman once she had come to terms with her widowhood over a long period of twelve years. Obviously, for Pannalal, himself Hindu and Bengali, the conflicting statements of the two widows made a lot of sociological sense, so much so that he exonerated Bibhabati from the charge of lying even while passing a verdict that went against her stand. The public outcry against Bibhabati, the widow of the second kumar was more of collective prejudice against an educated woman who refused to give up her status of widowhood when an alternative is made available.⁸

The judges were hardly swayed by public opinion. Till the end however, in spite of Pannalal Basu's explanations, Bibhabati remained an enigmatic figure.

Who was Bibhabati? Pannalal saw her as a chaste woman convinced that the holy man was an impostor. The common man of the street saw her as an adulteress involved in an illicit relation with Ashutosh Dasgupta the doctor who treated the second kumar in his death bed, as is indicated by the derogatory ballads that did the rounds in those days.⁹ The thrust of Chatterjee's narrative hints at other possibilities. From the letters written to Bibhabati by her mother as reproduced by Chatterjee (42–43–PJ), it is evident that the second Kumar's wife was intellectually his superior and very unhappy about her husband's reckless drinking and whoring. So she could very well have been a sensible woman who once having gained her freedom from the immoral syphilitic was determined at all costs to keep him out of her life. Again the prominent adversary of the plaintiff being Bibhabati's brother, Satyendra who had upgraded his status with his sister's share of the Bhawal estate, it could also be that Bibhabati was submissive to the patriarchal authority of her brother, conscious that Satyendra would lose heavily if the case went in favour of the plaintiff and therefore refused to recognize her husband to stay true to her brother. Like Sarah Woodruff, Bibhabati too remains a mystery till the end. Judge Pannalal Basu, by taking certain ritualistic and sociological Hindu

practices into consideration in Bibhabati's case, gives a complex twist to the puzzle, since these practices exist outside the administrative and judicial knowledge of colonial powers.

John Fowles ends *The French Lieutenant's Woman* with three closures; a commonplace ending, with Charles the hero abandoning Sarah to marry Ernestina the daughter of the wealthy tradesman and obtaining social and financial security at the cost of love; a romantic ending with Charles turning away from wealth and security to stand by Sarah the woman he loves when he finds her with his child; and an overtly feminist ending with Sarah striking out on her own and becoming part of a Pre-Raphaelite commune where Charles meets her years later only to be casually rejected. The first ending is in tune with the hegemonic nature of the Victorian text where the nonconformist is punished for his/her overreaching. Examples are Rebecca Sharp, Tess and Eustacia Vye. The first ending followed this 'haloed' tradition. The second and third endings plumb the mystique and multivalence of Sarah which yet spills over the two closures to haunt readers. Not only do we have three closures, but we also have three narrators mediating between the characters and reader. One is the easily recognizable, Thackeray-like intrusive narrator who presumes to know everything about his characters; the second is a postmodern self-reflexive narrator who admits the ultimate opacity of his characters:

I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters' minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in...a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word. (85 – FLW)

The third is Dr Grogan, the Victorian psychologist who presumes to interpret Sarah as a victim of abnormal psychology to Charles and the reader (Chapter 27). All three narrators are in the final count nonplussed by Sarah's motive behind coming out of a secure niche of Victorian life, that of the lady companion and inviting the wrath of society upon her head.

Bhawal sanyasi and Sarah Woodruff finally escape categorization as this method of controlling and managing knowledge ultimately produces knowledge that can only serve ideological purposes of the socially and economically dominant group, but fails to provide insight; to uncover the actual truth about the identity of the individual from the huge stacks of contradictory, multivalent

evidence. Though working in different arenas, Chatterjee and Fowles have a common purpose—to investigate, rupture and interrogate tame certainties—and to this end use a common setting: the age of Empire, an age of severe class, racial, regional and gender conflict. Documentation, categorization and ethnography, tools always to be found at the disposal of dominant classes (the British judicial system in Chatterjee's text and patriarchy in Fowles' novel) seek to browbeat and persuade the masses into accepting the viewpoint of the dominant class. Chatterjee and Fowles, by their use of pastiche and also by a skillful and uncanny juxtaposition of historical fact and popular belief, fiction and statistics, successfully refute the archeology of knowledge that seeks to prune and clip the pluralistic nature of man to suit the purposes of the oppressive Empire. They also push the borders of their respective narrative genres—in Fowles' case, the novel; in Chatterjee's case, the historical document—beyond the conventional scope of each. The cultural interdependence between history, politics, economics, race, gender-issues and literature is made evident by the authors' bold and imaginative straddling of multiple genres.

Notes And References :

1. All quotations are taken from the paperback edition of Partha Chatterjee's book published by Permanent Black in 2004
2. All quotations are taken from the 1987 Pan Book paperback edition of John Fowles' book.
3. Sanyasi means 'holy man', 'mendicant', 'hermit'.
4. Please note that I am not using the word 'real' because the historian actually hedges the issue of truth value. The title is inscribed in an interrogative form and in the epigraph Chatterjee muses: "To the memory of my father who loved to tell this story".
5. "Rani Bibhabati always insisted, until her death twenty years later, that although she had been defeated in every court of law on earth, she had won in the ultimate court of appeal...She was not surprised by the Privy Council defeat; the astrologers of Benaras had told her she would lose. But they had also predicted that the other man would never be able to enjoy his property. They were right." (384).
6. "To anticipate a question that I know will be asked of me by every reader, let me say at the beginning that after having spent more than four years working through the massive records of the Bhawal case, and although three courts of law ruled in favour of the plaintiff, I remain an agnostic. I do not know if the sanyasi who appeared in Dhaka in 1921 was in fact the second kumar of Bhawal who, as far as was known at the time, had died in Darjeeling in 1909. I say this after having applied to the evidence all the tests of truth that I know and after having evaluated, in as reasonable and transparent manner as I can, the

procedures adopted by the judges of the three courts who heard the case." (Partha Chatterjee's preface to *A Princely Imposter?*).

7. *Princely Imposter?* Chapter 12, 207-11.

8. POPULAR COMMENTARY

The tenants recognized him; the sister recognized him; not so the second rani;
The first rani said, Yes, I swear, the sadhu is the second kumar.

The second rani said, Well, sister, you're quite a sister-in-law, I see;
Don't I know my husband? The sadhu is not him.

There's some slight similarity, yes, which is why he can pass for the kumar,
That's why he is here in Bhawal – to grab the estate by fraud.

He's a fake sadhu, wants to be my husband, but I'm not so cheap.

The first rani said, Whatever happens, do wear a nice siri;

A new romance between old lovers, don't ever miss the chance;

The husband is at your door, go grab him, don't blacken your pretty face.

The second rani said, Slam a broom on his face; pull out both his ears, I will;
Can't stand his sight, I swear I never will let him in.

The first rani said, I've taken him as my own dear brother-in-law,

Now I'll take him to your room and wait and watch the uproarious fun.

Furious, the second rani said, do you want to go to court?

Fine, I'm ready, let's see what fun you get from it all.

So a huge trial began, the two sides locked in deadly war,

Witnesses on both sides, a few more for the sanyasi.

Money raining on both sides, the lawyers feeding to the brim,

The world waits to see what happens: which side will finally win?...

It's the tenants' money going up in smoke, the sanyasi bids his time,

He drinks his milk and eats his ghee and waits for the judge ment to come.

If he loses, he makes a run for it, with his lota [sanyasi's brass pot], and blanket
and all;

If he wins, he sits on the throne to which he truly does belong. (222- PI) -
Nagendranath Das, *Bhaoyaler Rani Sanyasir Ladai*, no. 2, Bhaoyaler Mamla
Rayer Katha, 1-3.

9. It's good times for the tenants of Bhawal, their sorrows are over,

The second kumar is now the new ruler....

The poet asks, second rani, why the tears in your eyes?

You didn't affirm when you needed to.

You could have stayed like a queen; now live like a beggar.

Everyone swore they knew him, only you refused.

Now pretend you are chaste, your dalliances are known....

Brother and sister have done the deed – It'll stay indelible as long as the world
exists,

No one will ever forget. (275-PI)

A. K. Ghani Colombi, *Bhaoyal yubarajer mṛtyu-līlā*, 10-12.

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Illusion And Reality: Two Examples From The Spanish Renaissance And Counter Reformation

Sudeshna Chakravarti

We are such stuff
As dream are made of and our little lives
Are bounded with a sleep.

(The Tempest)

The gap between illusion and reality or the confusion between them is an age old theme. Some philosophers have doubted the reality of the material world. Some, like Plato, would say that an ideal world existed and the material world was nothing but its shadow. Creative art or literature, therefore, was the shadow of a shadow, reflection of a reflection. An ancient Chinese philosopher, it is said, dreamt that he was a butterfly. When he woke up, he could not decide whether he was a man dreaming he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was, a man.

Side by side with what might be called physical scepticism i.e., whether our senses can be trusted, we have what Bertrand Russell called moral scepticism. This implies doubts whether our moral ideas ad beliefs are correct, doubts whether we can be sure about right or wrong. The ancient skeptics, such as Pyrrho, believed that no man could know for certain what was right and what was wrong, so it was best to accept the status quo, following existing laws and customs. We have seen the influence of Pyrrho on Montaigne and likewise the cases of exception.

It is the intention of this paper to discuss two instances of illusion versus reality in the literature of the Spanish Renaissance and Counter Reformation. The first, the romance of Don Quixote, the sad faced knight, is known the world over. He has been transformed into a myth. The second, a play, *Vida es Sueno* (Life is a dream) by Pedro Calderon de la Barca. Calderon, perhaps, is not so well known outside the Spanish speaking world, even though Fitzgerald translated eight of his plays into English and Somerset Maugham used one of his (Calderon's plays) in a matter of inter-textuality. However, Calderon might be considered the Spanish counterpart of Shakespeare, just as the so-called Age of Gold in Spain, from the sixteenth to the early seventeenth century, might be compared to the late Elizabethan and Jacobean age. Both eras witnessed a remarkable flowering of literature, particularly the theatre. The influence of the Counter Reformation on the Spanish Renaissance is well known, since Spain was the most fiercely, fanatically Catholic country

of the world at that time, the country of Ignatius Loyola, Saint Theresa, of the notorious Spanish Inquisition.

We do not wish to discuss Don Quixote or Life is a Dream in detail here but only analyze the theme of illusion versus reality, or rather certain aspects of the theme, that occur in the two works.

Cervantes and Don Quixote

It is superfluous to re-tell the story of Don Quixote since everyone knows it well. The hidalgo, that is one who belonged to the lowest rank of the Spanish nobility, was so enamoured of the medieval romances of knightly valour and courtly love that he set out on adventures as a knight errant. His mount was the skeletal horse, Rosinante, and his squire a plump practical peasant, Sancho Panza. Since every knight must have a lady of his dreams, to whom he would dedicate great deeds, Quixote chooses a good-looking peasant girl called Aldonza Lorenzo and gives her the romantic name, Dulcinea de Toboso. After many misadventures, he realizes that all he has done was an illusion and dies, at last clear-sighted.

We have seen two kinds of scepticism in philosophy, physical and moral. In Don Quixote, there are two kinds of illusion, physical, that is, when the senses of the hero deceive him, and moral, or at least psychological, when he realizes, what he is doing but not its implications. The most famous example of the first condition is when Quixote believes windmills to be giants and runs at them full tilt with his lance. The result might be guessed. "Tilting at wind mills" has become a catch word in many languages. In this case, the illusion is a physical one. The eyes of Quixote have been deceived by his pre-conceptions and fevered imagination. This is, perhaps, the only illusion of this kind in a total manner that appears in the book.

A partial illusion of the senses appears in the scene with the Asturiana i.e. a woman from the Asturias region. Quixote is asleep at night in an inn. The Asturiana, a woman of coarse appearance and loose morals, was going to meet her lover, one of the muleteers, when she stumbles accidentally into the bed of Don Quixote. Quixote had earlier thought that the inn was a castle of a noble, where he was being entertained hospitably.

The thought of payment did not enter his head, for a knight-errant never paid anybody or had any use for money. Nor he believes that the Asturiana is the beautiful daughter of the nobleman who had come to offer him her love. He assures her that he will remain faithful to his Dulcinea and the girl remains silent, out of fear. In this case, the illusion is not wholly physical or a betrayal of the senses. The girl is actually there. But Quixote wholly misreads her identity, because of pre-conceived notions.

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More complex is the incident in the cave of Montesions. Quixote believes that he has spent three days in the cave of some of the paladins of romance. He has met there the knights and ladies long dead, and moreover, a maid sent by Dulcinea who asks him for money. Sancho assures him that he (Quixote) has been there only a few hours. Is the whole thing a dream within a dream, a hallucination within a hallucination? The reference to the maid of Dulcinea, her common appearance and financial request seems to indicate a slight breakthrough of reality.

There are cases where Don Quixote cannot but believe his senses but finds an excuse to forget or disregard them. He realizes that Aldonza is far from the princess of his dreams but thinks that she has been changed by an enchanter and can be brought back to her original shape by counter magic. The theory of enchantment is a good way of bridging the gap between reality and illusion.

Sometimes the illusion is deliberately created by those around, by Don Quixote, either because they are afraid of angering him or because they want to lead him home or simply as a joke. The inn keeper performs the ceremony of knighthood and the servant girls at the inn wait on him. This is compared to an episode in an Arthurian romance. King Arthur sent Sir Lancelot, the greatest knight in his court to bring home Princess Guinevere from a foreign land to be his (Arthur's) Queen. Guinevere and her maids and companions wait on Lancelot and serve him and even his horse. In the words of an old romance:

No Knight was ever
So well served by ladies
As was Sir Lancelot
When he came from Britain;
The companions looked after him
The maidens tended his horse,¹

This is how Quixote sees himself. It is an illusion born out of identifying the past and present, reality and myth. But there are others who foster the myth, help him maintain the illusion. Dorothea, the daughter of a rich peasant, appears in the guise of a princess and a neighbour as the knight of the Moon. Their intentions are good; to bring Don Quixote safely home. Less innocent is the action of the Duke and the Duchess, who deliberately encourage the madness of Don Quixote, in order to enjoy the episode. Cervantes remarks curtly that those who encourage a madman for the sake of having a little fun are themselves mad.

There is another way of looking at the Quixotic illusions. Some of them are not illusions at all but genuine attempts to do good, which turn out badly.

Quixote releases imprisoned convicts, helps a young shepherd who is being wrongfully beaten up by his master and tries to defend a young girl, the daughter of a poor but noble widow, who has been seduced and abandoned. These acts are different from tilting at windmills or fighting imaginary giants. If the results turn out to be counter productive, the fault lies in the society around him, rather than in Quixote and his folly. It was this perhaps which made the great modern Spanish writer, Unamuno, declare that Quixote was a saint, a true Spanish saint.

Those around him feed the illusions of Don Quixote in other ways, even if they do not so deliberately. Almost everyone he meets, at least the educated people, are acquainted with the romances so dear to his heart. It has been said that to the ancient Greeks, Agamemnon and Achilles, mythical figures, were as real as Pericles or Alcibiades, contemporary political leaders. Many in medieval and Renaissance Europe probably considered the romance heroes, Orlando, Amadis, Lancelot and the rest as real as the kings of Spain and France. Quixote was not alone in his illusion, only the most extreme, carrying it to the greatest length.

The romances certainly had a great effect on the Renaissance in the words of a critic:

The most famous of all the later real-life
Knight—errants was Pierre da Terrail
Bayard....The celebrated “chevalier sans
Peur et sans Rywoche (The fearless and
faultless knight.) He was a soldier of
Incredible courage who was also famous
For his devoutness, generosity and gentleness
to the weak. The continuity between medieval
chivalry and the humanism of the
renaissance is neatly illustrated by the
fact that Francois I of France, the
great patron of art and letters, chose to
be dubbed a knight by the Chevalier Boy art.²

The Counter Reformation also felt the influence of the romances even though in the novel Don Quixote, the Church is supposed to frown on them. The two greatest figures of the Spanish Counter Reformation, Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order and Saint Theresa imitated the romance heroes, in their way, as Quixote had done in a more extreme and insane fashion. Renan, the nineteenth century French scholar, speaks of the influence of Amodes on Loyola. Renan seems to regret the fact that Calvin, a leader of the opposite

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camp, had no great love for the romances. In the words of the historian Macaulay, Loyola had wanted to play the role of the knight-errant in the field of religion.

He would fight the great dragon of heresy
He would be the champion of the Woman
clothed in the sun. (i.e., the Virgin Mary).³

Can we then consider the knight of the sorrowful countenance the most extreme, but by no means isolated example if an illusion that enveloped his time and place? We must remember, too, that in anything that did not concern his monomania, Quixote was sober of a sound judgment, much respected by his neighbours. The contrast and comparison with Sancho Panza emphasizes the complex nature of the illusion. Don Quixote, tall, thin, wrapt in his dreams and ideals and Sancho, short, plump, earthy might be compared to a stick and a ball side by side. Yet Sancho shares a small portion of the illusion or idealism of his master, otherwise he would not follow him. On the other hand, Quixote sometimes comes down to the realistic, practical level, of his squire.

Certain Cervantes scholars have argued in this way. The contemporary Catholic Church had declared, there was a relative truth, side by side with the absolute truth. It is perhaps what our Rabindranath called "Aaro Satya". Don Quixote perhaps pursued this type of truth. His view of things is laughably distant from reality, yet we would have been pleased if it was close to reality. Quixote turns an ordinary buxom, hard-working peasant girl into the princess of his dreams. But is it not the nature of love to exaggerate the qualities of the beloved? Many would agree with Thomas Mann, the famous German novelist that it would have been better if the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance had died with his dreams intact, riding into the other world on his Rosinante. But the final break with illusions is in keeping with the structure of the novel and the philosophy of Cervantes.

The theme of illusion appears elsewhere also in Cervantes. In one of his short stories or novellas, a man believed that he is made of glass. This is a case of physical illusion, a disturbance of the senses, as Quixote with his windmills.

The final question: did the ideal of chivalry knight errantry, ever exist in reality outside the gilded pages of romance? Certainly the middle ages, particularly its wars, were extraordinarily savage. Women were particular victims. Abuse of women was practically taken for granted while outwardly honouring them with tokens of courtly love.

Chaplain Andrea, himself a theoretician of the ideals of courtly love,

recommended rape, at least if the man is noble and the victim a peasant girl. Madory, the great chronicler of the Arthurian legends was himself accused of rape, rightly or wrongly and he recounts such incidents in the court of King Arthur. In the words of Susan Brawnsteller, the first instinct of a medieval knight when he saw an unprotected woman was to rape her! Was chivalry then a huge fraud an illusion, beside which the illusions of Quixote is a trifle?⁴

A partial answer is given by Guizot, the famous French statesman and historian of the nineteenth century. The codes and ideas of chivalry were something like the Geneva conventions of today. They were not always effective—far from it—but without them, things would have been even worse. Were there some Bayards or real life Quixotes among the hosts of chivalry? We can only hope so otherwise Quixote would have cherished an dream of a dream, illusion of an illusion.

La Vida er Sueno, Life is a Dream might be considered the Spanish counterpart of MacBeth or Hamlet. Calderon, arguably the greatest playwright of the Golden Age, was, like Cervantes a complete Renaissance man: priest, lawyer, soldier, poet, playwright even interested in music. Cervantes had many adventures as his hero, though they were neither comic nor imaginary. He lost his left-hand in the great sea battle of Lepante and was a prisoner for five years in North Africa. Calderon fought in Flanders and Lombardy and against the Catalan rebels.

The story of Life is a Dream is as follows. Basileus, the King of Poland, is an astrologer. He casts the horoscope of his new-born son and only child, Segismundo, and finds, to his horror, that infant will grow up to be an evil man, a monster and will trample his father beneath his feet. The child is sent away to a remote castle in the distant mountain. He is brought up as a prisoner wearing a chain. His jailer and guardian is Clotaldo, a nobleman trusted by the king. Reared and living for twenty years or more almost like an animal, Segismundo, not unnaturally, becomes fierce, morose, animal-like. In short, the prophecy about his evil nature turns out to be a self-fulfilling one.

Meanwhile Basileus has grown old and has no other child. The possible heirs to the throne are Astolfo, Duke of, Murcovy a nephew of Basileus and Estrella, the princess of an unnamed land, a niece of Basileus. To settle the question of succession, a marriage is arranged between the two, Rosaura, the illegitimate daughter of Clotaldo, by a lady whom he had seduced and abandoned long ago in a foreign land, now turns up. Sharing her mother's fate, she (Rosaura) had been seduced and abandoned by Astolfo and has followed him to Poland, seeking reparation or revenge. Together with her servant Clarina "gracioso", somewhat like the Fool or Jester of a Shakespearean play Rosaura comes by accident to the castle where Segismundo is imprisoned.

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Like a heroine of Shakespeare she is in masculine dress. At first Clotaldo wants to kill the two intruders because they have unsettlingly discovered the state secret about the existence of the imprisoned prince. But then he recognizes Rosaura as his son / daughter, through a sword which he had given her mother once. Rosaura is brought to the court, now in female garb, though under an assumed name.

Basileus now has doubts about what he has done to his son. After all, astrology is not infallible. He decides to give the young man a chance and see if he is really evil. Segismundo is brought to the court on trial as it were. Having been reared like a beast, he behaves like one. He who has never seen a woman before (Rosaura was in male guise when she first appeared before him) is violently attracted first by Estrella, then by Rosaura. His passion brooks no delay. When Clotaldo and a courtier try to stop him, he attacks the former and throws the latter out of the window. Basileus is now convinced that the horoscope was indeed correct and that his son is a monster, unfit for the throne, unfit even for human society. Segismundo is put into drugged sleep and taken back to the castle, once again a prisoner. He is made to believe that his going to the court, being, placed on the throne, was nothing but a dream. In reality he had never left his prison at all. (He had been similarly dragged when being taken from the prison to the court.)

However, the existence of the legitimate heir to the throne cannot be kept a secret. The common people do not want Astolfo a foreigner to inherit the throne of Poland. They rise in revolt and release Segismundo from prison. At the head of a rebel army, Segismundo defeats the royal forces. The horoscope has proved to be true. Basileus is defeated; at the feet of his son. Segismundo is once more the King, the master, as he had been a while ago. But he had been made to think that the previous occasion was nothing but a dream. He wonders whether even now he is dreaming or awake. Nevertheless he decides to follow the path of righteousness, whether or not the present state of affairs is a dream. He blames his father for having followed a course of action that was certain to make the astrological prediction come true by turning the new-born child into a monster. Basileus acknowledges his fault. But Segismundo realizes that the greatest victory must be over himself. Using his power justly and generously, Segismundo forbears to take revenge for what he has suffered. He pardons his father and Clotaldo, orders Astolfo to marry Rosaura and decides to marry Estrella himself. He concludes in this fashion.

Why are you surprised? Why are you astounded?

When my teacher was a dream

And in my anxiety I'm afraid

I may wake up again and find myself

Once more in my locked
 Prison? And even if that doesn't happen
 Merely dreaming it is enough
 For in that way I came to know
 That all human fortune
 Finally passes away like a dream.
 And I wish today to enjoy mine.
 For as long as it lasts.
 Asking pardon for our faults.
 Since it becomes noble hearts
 To pardon them

Life says Segismundo is a dream, an uncertain affair, not only for him but for everyone else. Only the other life is certain. Even if this earth is a dream, Heaven is a reality. We must follow the dictates of justice and morality and religion and wait for after life.

How are we to interpret this great play? Segismundo has been compared to Hamlet, Clotaldo, the interfering count with Polonius, Basileus the monarch, who dabbles in the supernatural, with Prospero. The commoner who is temporarily made to believe he is recalls the story of Abu Hosein in the Arabian Nights. In Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew an illusion is created in a similar manner. A play by Calderon himself bears some similarities with this theme: Yerros de naturelza y acierto de la fortuna (Mistakes of nature corrected by fortune). An ambitious princess plans to kill her twin brother, who is her very image, so that she might disguise herself as a man and ascend the throne. But the disguise is so successful that a man who wanted to kill the brother kills the sister instead and the brother is restored to the throne. The gender illusion in this play echoes in the male disguise of Rosaura in Life is a Dream. In Don Quixote, in a certain episode, the lovers Carpos and Happy Anna each assumes the dress of the opposite sex.

But the deeper meaning of the play lies in the various levels of skepticism. In the context of Don Quixote we have seen both physical and moral skepticism. In Calderon's play physical skepticism—whether our very existence is reality or an illusion—underlies something like moral certainty. At the end of the drama, Segismundo is still not certain whether he is dreaming or not. However, he will act as if it was reality and as one should act in reality. His decision reminds us of Pascal's idea of wagering on immortality. It is apparently a win-win wager.

Another comparison might be drawn with another play of Calderon, El Magics Prodigiose, The Great Magician. The play uses the Faust theme, but

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with a difference. A great scholar sells his soul to Satan, in return for unlimited knowledge. He asks Satan the source of the universe, of all things. Satan is forced to name God. The scholar thereupon embraces Christianity, becomes a martyr and so his soul is saved. Here again questioning and doubt lead to moral certainty. Even the Faustian pact with the Devil becomes a means of salvation.

Illusion can also enter human calculation. Clarin, a *gracioso* who perhaps recalls Sancho, but on a slighter scale, hides during the battle in an apparently safe place. It is precisely here that a stray bullet kills him. Illusion can cloud human emotions and relationships. Both Rosaura and her mother have been deceived by the men they loved. The Princes Estrella believes that Astolfo loves her, till she finds the portrait of Rosaura with him. It is clear that Astolfo is a heartless seducer who has abandoned Rosaura and is planning to marry his cousin, the princess, merely for selfish reasons of status, knowledge, too might be an illusion. The royal astrologer Basileus has doubts at one point whether the stars have given him true sight into the future. Certainly the means which he takes to avert future evil are sure to bring it. In the words of Segismundo:

If any man were told
“Some inhuman beast
Will kill you” would he be choosing
The proper protection by awaking them
When they were sleeping?
If he were told “That sword
You’re wearing will be
The one that will kill you”
Would it be wise then
To take it out of the sheath
And point it at his breast?

We may mention that astrology was widely practiced by many men of the Renaissance, scholars as well as charlatans. The altitude of the Catholic Church towards this pseudo-science was ambiguous. Astrology seemed to point to a non-Christian supernatural, which Christianity could tolerate. At the same time, many churchmen of the highest rank dabbled in astrology or had their horoscopes cast.

The conclusion would be in the words of Segismundo:

The greatest crime of man
Is that he was born.

Birth itself might be an illusion since it carries within it the seed of future death.

The two greatest works of the Spanish Renaissance and Counter Reformation raise the age old and never answered question: what is real and what is not, on the physical or mental realms.

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Romanticism: Key Ideas And Concepts

Nishi Pulugurtha

The term “Romanticism” eludes precise definition and examinations of the term have only yielded an enumeration of its characteristic features. “The essence of Romanticism,” Mario Praz says, “comes to consist in that which cannot be described”.¹ The origin of the term has been traced to the romances and it was subsequently used to describe anything exotic and wonderful. Coleridge writing in the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) says that his purpose in the *Lyrical Ballads* was to write about “persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic”.² “By romantic poems,” Thomas Arnold wrote in 1862, “we mean poems in which heroic subjects are epically treated, after the manner of the old romances of chivalry”.³

Marilyn Butler says:

English Romanticism is impossible to define with historical precision because the term itself is historically unsound. It is now applied to writers of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, who did not think of themselves as Romantics. Instead they divided themselves by literary precept and by ideology into several distinct groups, dubbed by their exponents “Lakeists,” “Cockneys,” “Satanists,” Scotsmen. It was the middle of the nineteenth century before they were gathered into one band as the English Romantics, and the present tendency of textbooks so insist upon the resemblance to one another of (especially) six major poets—Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats—dates only from about 1940.⁴

A.O. Lovejoy argued that the one thing definite about Romanticism is that it poses a problem in understanding what it really is. Romanticism, he says, should always be regarded in the plural.⁵ In a counter-argument, Rene Wellek says that literary critics merely need to use the term “Romanticism” correctly. He argues that “the major romantic movements form a unity of theories, philosophies, and style, and that these, in turn, form a coherent group of ideas each of which implicates the other”.⁶ Jerome J.McGann, in his work on the romantic ideology, says:

The poetry of Romanticism is everywhere marked by extreme forms of displacement and poetic conceptualization whereby the actual human issues with which the poetry is concerned are resituated in a variety of idealized localities.⁷

Romanticism "has to do with a fundamental state of mind, with the pattern of ontological and normative commitments".⁸ Isaiah Berlin gives a long catalogue of what constitutes Romanticism. Among other things it is,

...the confused teeming fulness and richness of life, *Fülle des Lebens*, inexhaustible multiplicity, turbulence, violence, conflict, chaos, but also it is peace, oneness with the great 'I Am', harmony with the natural order, the music of the spheres, dissolution in the all-containing spirit.⁹

Romanticism is associated primarily with a change in the direction of literature—"less rational and more emotional, less urbanized and with more feeling for nature"¹⁰ – this became the characteristic of Romantic literature. It is identified with a "new interest in external nature", an interest in man, in the "relation of man to God", "a new interest in the human soul" and in cultures remote temporally and spatially.¹¹ Morse Peckham associates Romanticism with a shift in European thought in the late eighteenth century – a shift from conceiving the universe as a static mechanism to conceiving it as a dynamic organism. He classifies Romanticism into two categories – positive romanticism and negative romanticism. The former refers to those men, ideas, and art in which organicism has completely developed, the latter to those which have left behind static mechanism but have not achieved an integration with the new organicism.¹²

The late eighteenth century in Europe was basically an age of transition. Industrialisation, modernisation, democracy, the French Revolution and the nationalist movements in Italy, Germany, and Greece, all contributed to altering society and human relationships. A period of great intellectual and political activity this age of transition provided the fertile ground for Romanticism. Many of the characteristic features of Romanticism had their origin in literary and philosophical sources. Two great movements of European thought stood in an intimate but complex intellectual relation to Romanticism – the revolutionary naturalism of Rousseau and the transcendental movement of Kant and Hegel.¹³

English Romanticism owes much to the *Sturm und Drang* movement in Germany. This awareness amends the widely accepted idea that Romantic literature began with William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. It is also equally true that what are now designated as typically 'Romantic' traits were already present in the work of the Augustans. Contrasted with the Romantic emphasis on emotion, feeling, and imagination, the neo-classicism of the Augustan age stressed on order, harmony and rationalism. However, it needs to be mentioned that

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Romanticism was not just a reaction to some of the tendencies of the eighteenth century but also an outgrowth of it.

The transition towards the new orientation was first witnessed during the middle of the eighteenth century. Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742) and Mark Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1745) form a link between the standards of the conventional morality of the Enlightenment and the new ideals which stressed on imagination. Similar ideas are also present in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751) with its awareness of the ephemeral quality of human life and its evocation of grave scenes. This moralizing tendency is not particular to poetry alone and is also present in the novels of Samuel Richardson.

A work of importance in any consideration of Romanticism is Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). Many of the ideas now regarded as Romantic can be found in this work:

An *Original* may be said to be of a *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it *grows* and is not *made*: Imitations are often a sort of manufacture wrought by those *mechanics, art* and *labour*, out of pre-existent materials not their own.¹⁴

The notions of originality and spontaneity, so integral to Romantic aesthetics make an appearance here.

The idea of Imagination forges a link between the Enlightenment and the Romantic age. Cartesian philosophy was responsible for rupturing the link between man and nature resulting in a dualism which was aided and abetted by the mechanistic philosophy. Imagination held the hope for reconciliation, a synthesis of man's spirit and the reality of nature. This idea of imagination, which developed in the Enlightenment and reached its culmination in Romanticism, introduced a new notion of thought and art current even now. This new stage can only be regarded as Pre-Romantic, since the new ideas were merely trends of thought—the idea of Imagination, the interest in external nature, the idea of sensibility and the emphasis on genius. The Romantic poets took up these varied ideas elevating imagination to the status of the most important idea.

The literature of the *Sturm und Drang* was one of protest and revolution. This period in Germany is characterized as *Geniezeit* (the age of the genius) because of the emphasis on the importance of the exceptional man, one whose achievements and experience were unique and which were transformed and transfigured by the "modifying colours of imagination"¹⁵ into a creative work. The importance of imagination, the belief in the inspired genius, the primacy

of intuitive spontaneous feeling, freedom of expression, the idea of organic growth which resulted in an interest in the Middle Ages and a new vision of nature as a part of a larger universe – these features of the *Sturm und Drang* later became key concepts of Romanticism. Though England received its stimulus from Germany, most of the ideas had their origin on English soil. Beginning in the 1790s, these ideas infiltrated into England through the medium of literature. English Romanticism, however, is less systematic and less self-conscious than its Continental counterparts. While their Continental counterparts in France and Germany had to follow and outdo their glorious predecessors, the English Romantics were conscious of representing a new beginning.

Marilyn Butler in her study of the background of the Romantic period, says:

‘Romanticism’ is inchoate because it is not a single intellectual movement but a complex of responses to certain conditions which western society has experienced and continues to experience since the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁶

In its primary manifestation, Romanticism marks a shift in the nature of man, nature, and the cosmos. It also signals a change in the nature and function of the artist, and the relation between the artist and his audience.

The Enlightenment was committed to change and development. Working in tandem with the forces of external nature, man had the power to change the course of events, a change that was to be achieved through the free and uninhibited exercise of reason and sense. Romanticism changed this perspective. The Romantic world is one in which nature plays an important role. Nature is seen as having great control over man, manipulating him and infusing him with energy and desire. This shift in perspective is evident in the different approaches to nature in the paintings of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Constable’s paintings of the Suffolk landscape evoke pictures of the golden age. *The Cornfield* and *The Hay Wain* are perfect pictures of tranquillity. In contrast to these evocations of serenity and tranquility are the paintings of Turner—*Rain, Stream and Speed* or *Rockets and Blue Lights*—which show nature in its fury and energy, threatening and destroying.

Romanticism is popularly associated with the cult of the individual personality and the exaltation of the artist. The artist becomes the medium through which nature’s purposes are achieved. The Romantic artist took on the function and character of a seer, prophet, or visionary. He is subject to inspiration, hence the ideas of discipline, rationality, prudence, and control associated with the Enlightenment give way to those of spontaneity and originality. Concomitant with the idea of spontaneity is a new conception of

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art. Enlightenment literature is characterized by a sense of completeness and closure. In contrast, Romantic literature is essentially open-ended and hence can be read and comprehended in a broader context. The presence of a large number of unfinished and incomplete poems by writers of this period testify to this. This tendency, however, is not peculiar to literature alone, it is evident in painting and music, too—the sketch, and the short, lyrical forms, respectively. The change in the role and position of the artist and the work of art involved a change in the relation between the artist and his audience. The Enlightenment artist was a teacher addressing an audience. The Romantics relegated the audience/reader to a passive role, the artist was of primary importance.

Hans Eichner says:

Romanticism is, perhaps predominantly, a desperate rearguard action against the spirit and implications of modern science—a rearguard action that ... liberated the arts from the constraints of a pseudoscientific aesthetics but that was bound to fail in the proper domain of science.¹⁷

The mechanistic philosophy of the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century is linked with the developments in modern science. God and the irrational had no place in the worldview projected. It was with Fichte that the concept of the mechanistic universe began to change. The dualism associated with the mechanistic philosophy gave way to a new system in which free will assumed utmost importance and the space separating mind and matter disappeared. Schelling in his *System der Naturphilosophie* produced the first elaboration of a philosophy that might be called Romantic. Mechanistic philosophy gave way to organicism and all phenomena came to be explained, not by logical deduction alone, but by unconscious mental processes as well.

The association of science with industrial capitalism was the reason for the distrust towards it. Blake was among the earliest of those who rejected science. Coleridge and Shelley were among the Romantics who were greatly interested in scientific phenomena and in the developments in science. Chemistry revealed to Coleridge the relation between things apparently different. In *The Friend*, Coleridge writes,

as “the lunatic, the lover, and the poet;” suggest each other to Shakespeare’s Theseus, as soon as his thoughts present him the ONE FORM, of which they are but varieties; so water and flame, the diamond, the charcoal, and the mantling champagne, with its ebullient sparkles, are convoked and fraternized by the theory of the chemist. This is, in truth, the first charm of chemistry, and the secret of the almost universal interest excited by its discoveries.

....It is the sense of a principle of connection given by the mind, and sanctioned by the correspondency of nature. Hence the strong hold which in all ages chemistry has had on the imagination...¹⁸

Chemistry, like poetry, revealed an underlying unity not immediately apparent. A.N. Whitehead, in his *Science and the Modern World*, says:

Shelley's attitude to science was at the opposite pole to that of Wordsworth. He loved it, and is never tired of expressing in poetry the thoughts which it suggests. It symbolises to him joy, and peace, and illumination. What the hills were to the youth of Wordsworth, a chemical laboratory was to Shelley.¹⁹

The Romantic poets rebelled, not against science itself but rather the mechanistic model of life that it afforded. The Romantic artist, like the scientist, strove to reconcile natural phenomena with experience.

Imitation and reason, important aspects of the earlier mechanistic philosophy, gave way to inspiration which best reveals its power in poetry. The Romantics considered poetry as the spring of higher truths. This belief is linked with a change in the language of poetry as well. As the mechanistic philosophy gave way to organicism, the belief in the relation between reason and nature, between knowledge and ordinary prose, also gave way to a symbolic language. The truths of poetry could only be expressed using the special powers of imagination. The emphasis on the importance of imagination led, quite inevitably, to the fascination with dreams, supernatural phenomena, and to a predilection for such genres as romances, and tales with supernatural incidents and characters.

In this new world order individualism assumed great importance, and it is this which characterizes the Romantic outlook. The older ideas of oneness and integration gave way to the regard for the rights and feelings of the individual. This is evident in the large number of autobiographies which were written during this period. The Romantics rejected the external, social order and reason; instead, they turned inwards, into the soul of the individual. Evidence of this is seen in the interest in psychology and the inner senses. This interest in psychology and in different types of psychological theory led the Romantics to explore and use images and metaphors which convey the goings-on in the human mind.²⁰ The Romantic is concerned not with things as they are but as they appear to him. This suggests the importance they attached to imagination.

Imagination is the means of perception, it is not just the faculty of creating images. It is the power of going beyond the external reality of the images, of going into the heart of those images to conjure up something different and

unique. That the Romantics were concerned with imagination, with states of mind and other phenomena not rationally explicable, does not suggest that they were escaping from reality. The English Romantics were very much involved in the realities of their age and in the revolutionary climate of their time. Their poetry and political and social commentary clearly attests to it.

The Romantic period in England was characterized by an increase in the importance of trade and industrialization. The period also marked an increase in imperialism, with the imperial activity spreading out to the Eastern hemisphere as well. William Empson's argument that the theme of "The Rime of Ancient Mariner" is maritime expansion and that the guilt of the Ancient Mariner is the guilt of the European powers in their ill treatment of the people in the colonies adds to an understanding of the nature of imperial policies.²¹ The important aspect of this maritime and colonial expansion was the question of slave trade, an aspect dealt with by many of the Romantics. Hannah More wrote her long poem, "Slavery", for the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in support of one of William Wilberforce's attempts to get an Abolition Bill through Parliament.

Romanticism is the expression of a division between self and society, body and soul. The Romantic poet questions and explores various possibilities of belief before he can arrive at a particular one. Romantic poetry involves a structuring and restructuring of traditional ideas about what poetry should offer. This is the reason why Romantic poets often refer to their poems as experiments. In the Advertisement to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth states, "The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments."²² In the same year, Novalis wrote in a notebook of the need to restore 'spontaneous feeling' and 'Romanticize the world': "By endowing the commonplace with a lofty significance, the ordinary with a mysterious aspect, the familiar with the merit of the unfamiliar, the finite with the appearance of infinity, I am Romanticizing."²³

L.J. Swingle, discussing the origin of Romanticism, says:

Romanticism is associable first of all, with considerable disgust of orders, philosophies, systems as such – distrust of them in principle, because they look suspiciously like mental entrapments to a Romantic consciousness.²⁴

Romantic poetry questions, but the poems do not present any solution. The reader is invited to join in the very experience of deciphering along with the poet. Hence the open-endedness of much of the poetry. It attempts to disrupt the reader's sense of order and structure and leads the reader to an underlying world of disordered data. To arrive at a final grasp of the experience depicted

and the doctrine it attests, the unstructured data needs to be explored. Tilottama Rajan says,

What we witness in Romanticism is the development of a literature in which the text is the heuristic stimulus rather than a finished product.²⁵

Paul de Man, in his study of Romanticism, says that it is characterized by:

An abundant imagery coinciding with an equally abundant quality of natural objects, the theme of imagination linked closely to the theme of nature, such is the fundamental ambiguity that characterizes the poetics of romanticism.²⁶

The two key concepts of Romanticism are the theory of organicism and that of the symbol. Rene Wellek insists on “three criteria” for Romanticism: “imagination for the view of poetry, nature for the view of the world, and symbol and myth for poetic style”.²⁷ He further states that “All the Romantic poets conceived of nature as an organic whole, on the analogue of man rather than a concourse of atoms”,²⁸ and that “All the great Romantic poets are mythopoeic, are symbolists”.²⁹

Geoffrey Hartman, in an influential essay on Romanticism, says that the central concern of the Romantic poets is “to maintain something of the interacting unity of self and life”. The Romantic poets exalt wholeness and unity and seek to see things whole: “Consciousness is only a middle term, the strait through which ... the artist plots to have something pass through whole.”³⁰ This accounts for the presence, in Romantic poetry, of figures of isolation and loneliness like the Wandering Jew, often appearing in the guise of Cain, or the Ancient Mariner. These lonely figures are wanderers, cast off from the normal humdrum of life. They are doomed to live and as their knowledge increases so does their isolation.

One of the major achievements of Romantic poetry is that it opened up new vistas and avenues of truth. The individual assumed utmost importance and imagination became the focal point from which the individual was able to perceive and create art. Imagination, according to Coleridge, is the very soul of poetry. Almost all the Romantic poets had something to say on this primal faculty. However much they differed in their interpretations of it, they all stressed on its unifying, creative nature. Imagination, for the Romantics, was a way of accessing and reaching the truth, a means of creating order out of disorder.

Romanticism was not just restricted to poetry, but was seen in political, social, religious, and psychological areas of thought as well. It was a widespread phenomenon which involved all spheres of human activity.

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The Anxiety of Influence: Gendered Authorship in Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*

Tania Chakraverty

Power over sex is exercised in the same way at all levels. From top to bottom, in its overall decisions and its capillary interventions alike,... it operates according to the simple and endlessly reproduced mechanisms of law, taboo, and censorship: from state to family, from prince to father, from the tribunal to the small change of everyday punishments, from the agencies of social domination to the structures that constitute the subject himself, one finds a general form of power, varying in scale alone.

(Foucault 84-85)

The Garden of Eden, a posthumously published work, examines creative life very critically and at a greater length than any other Hemingway text. The text deals with a search for aesthetic truth, or artistic truth—by both the man and the woman. The text deals with the creative struggles and with the enervating anxieties of the female artist. Catherine Bourne is ambitious of becoming an artist but she suffers from feelings of inadequacy concerning the use of language. Because she is a woman (albeit an a-traditional one) Catherine lacks full access to and full control over language, which is male-controlled, phallocratic and gender marked. Gilbert and Gubar have analysed women's writing in terms of a literary paternity. According to them, in western patriarchal culture: "...the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis. ...If the pen is a metaphorical penis, from what organ can female texts generate?" (Gilbert and Gubar 6-7) The sexual experiments that Catherine initiates are like, as she says "growing something". One might presume that it is akin to growing a female phallus, which transforms her from Catherine to Peter. Catherine turns to an alternative medium for self-expression—her physical body. Dale Spender's *Man Made Language* also harps on the same idea. She too states that women have been fundamentally oppressed by a male-dominated language. Accepting Foucault's argument that what is important and true depends on who controls the discourse, it becomes obvious that the male domination of discourse has always trapped women inside a male truth.

Catherine's suffering and presumed descent into madness relate directly to her debilitating insecurities in the face of the patriarchal dominance of the arts. In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf suggests at one point that all

great writing is ‘androgynous’, she also wants a separate literary tradition for women’s writing. As Katherine Mullin notes in “Modernisms and Feminisms”, about this genre Woolf states:

It is probable, however, that both in life and in art the values of a woman are not the values of a man. Thus, when a woman comes to write...she will find that she is perpetually wishing to alter the established values—to make serious what appears insignificant to a man, and trivial what is to him important.
(Quoted by Mullin in Rooney 142)

Luce Irigaray too feels that women constitute a paradox or a contradiction within the discourse of identity. Women are the “sex” which is not “one”. Judith Butler analyses Irigaray’s words:

Within a language pervasively masculinist, a phallogocentric language, women constitute the *unrepresentable*. In other words, women represent the sex that cannot be thought, a linguistic absence and opacity. Within a language that rests on univocal signification, the female sex constitutes the unconstrainable and undesignatable. In this sense, women are the sex which is not “one” but multiple. (Butler 13)

Catherine constantly talks of her desire to create a text not with the male controlled language but with her body. The kind of text that Catherine Bourne wants to create defies and challenges the traditional phallocentric norm. Cixous urges: “Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth.” (Selden and Widdowson 227) Cixous finds the female imagination infinite and beautiful. She states that a truly liberated woman writer, when she begins to exist, will say: “I...overflow; my desires have invented new desire, my body knows unheard-of songs. Time and again...I have felt so full of luminous torrents that I could burst — burst with forms much more beautiful than those which are put up in frames and sold for a stinking fortune.” (Selden and Widdowson 227). Cixous states that repressed sexual desires can be a source of creativity and that since women are taught in patriarchal cultures to deny their libidinal desires, they are also thwarted from becoming creative artists. In *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich states:

...female biology... has far more radical implications than we have yet come to appreciate. Patriarchal thought has limited female biology to its own narrow specifications. The feminist vision has recoiled from female biology for these reasons; it will, I believe, come to view our physicality as a resource rather than a destiny.

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In order to live a fully human life, we require not only *control* of our bodies...we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, the corporeal ground of our intelligence. (Quoted in Showalter 251)

Catherine Bourne desires that her body and her libidinal text be heard and comprehended. Catherine's refusal to write the text herself could be interpreted as a purist affirmation of her belief in the libido's ability to articulate truth. Cixous flatly rejects the mind over body hierarchy in Western thought and emphasizes that writing is produced, and understood, in relation to the body. As Kathy Willingham writes, Catherine realizes that, "the libido ... provides an effective measure of self-expression, creativity, and art..." (Wagner-Martin 299). Catherine constantly shows a preference for libidinal instead of linguistic expression. At one point, she tells her husband: "I'll put on one of my tight shirts so you can tell what I think about things..."(175-176)

Catherine's own haircut, her persuasion that David should match his own hairdo to hers, the subsequent bleaching of their hair and the constant sun tannings clearly reveal Catherine's psychosexual creativity and artistry. These physical manifestations of her artistry entice David to engage in transgressive sexuality, which in turn is a defiance of the phallogocentric order. Shoshana Felman writes: "the challenge facing the woman today is nothing less than to 'reinvent' language, to speak not only against, but outside of the specular phallogocentric structure, to establish a discourse the status of which would no longer be defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning." (Showalter 253) Her body becomes a seat for communicating both ideas as well as sexual pleasure. All these acts of self-expression lead to what Cixous has termed autoeroticism.

Hemingway registers Catherine's gradual alienation from language. The frustrated artist in her however desires to give vent to her instinctive creative urges. Kathy Willingham quotes from Carolyn Burke:

The central issue in much recent women's writing in France is to find and use an appropriate female language. Language is the place to begin: *a prise de conscience* must be followed by a *prise de la parole*. ...In this view, the very forms of the dominant mode of discourse show the mark of the dominant masculine ideology. Hence, when a woman writes or speaks herself into existence, she is forced to speak in something like a foreign tongue, a language with which she may be personally uncomfortable.

(Wagner-Martin 296)

Lacan finds the woman fluid and unstable and associates female sexuality with poetic productivity, with psychosomatic drives that disrupt unitary

meaning and logocentric or rather phallogocentric discourse. Catherine's inability to access language shows, in the Lacanian sense, an inability to enter into the Symbolic smoothly. Lacan has theorized that the acquisition of language and the entry into the symbolic occurs at the Oedipal phase in which the child acquires his or her gender identity. Julia Kristeva, follows Lacan in her conception of the subject and in her approach to the woman question. She deals with twin polarities—the closed rational systems and the open, disruptive and irrational systems. She makes clear demarcations between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* which she says, give rise to other polarities. The *avant-garde* poet enters the Body of the Mother and resists the Name of the Father. Thus the semiotic, Kristeva associates with the female body, and the symbolic with the Law of the Father which is the stabilizing, censoring and repressing factor instrumental in bringing discourse into being. As for writing, Kristeva sees women as facing two alternatives: either valorizing "phallic" dominance, associated with the privileged father-daughter relationship, which gives rise to the tendency toward mastery, or valorizing "a silent underwater body," which entails the choice of marginalization ("Marks and de Courtivron" 166). This inability to enter the symbolic is further reinforced by Catherine's obsession with mirrors. This reveals Catherine's love for the Imaginary or the pre-Symbolic state. It is significant that Cixous is of the opinion that such alienations from the Symbolic are advantageous.

Catherine reveals her non-conformism not only in her marital relationship but also in her commitment to the libidinal text that she wants to create and fails to transcribe in words. She emerges as the exemplum of a liberated woman who, says Cixous, can usher in a larger political revolution. Cixous argues for a positive representation of femininity in a discourse termed the '*écriture féminine*'. She opines that women's writing: "will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallocentric system". Always the 'Other' or negative of any hierarchies society may construct, *l'écriture féminine* will at once subvert 'masculine' symbolic language and create new identities for women, which, in their turn, will lead to new social institutions." (Linda Wagner-Martin 307) Cixous and Kristeva both propose that women assume a negative function, one that would reject whole structures and explode social codes. Again Kathy Willingham quotes Cixous and adds that feminine language:

"will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetoric, regulations and codes."(315) Feminine language promises revolution on two levels. Extrinsically it triggers social and political changes. Intrinsically it undermines phallocentric expectations and demands concerning syntax, grammar, linear thought, Aristotelian unity and narrative teleology. (Quoted by Willingham in Wagner-Martin 301)

Catherine's revolutionary use of language as we can see reflects both levels. Catherine employs a language that clearly opposes phallogocentric discourse. In addition to communicating with her libido, she uses nonlinear, unorthodox patterns of speech made up of fragmented sentences, irregular syntax and punctuation and replete with contradictions and meandering logic.

Taking Cixous's point of view one ought to agree that like others, as a woman artist, Catherine is bound to question her own mental state and her sanity. Cixous states that the woman who internalizes phallocentric criticisms begins to accuse herself of being a monster. Gilbert and Gubar too have argued that women writers have achieved a distinctive female voice by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. The stereotypes are always that of 'angel' and 'monster'. Catherine as a lover is addressed as 'devil' and as writer she fits herself in with the monster category. Gilbert and Gubar have written in "Infection in the Sentence" that the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of the patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention — all these phenomena of "inferiorization" mark the woman writer's struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart. They explain that the highly creative woman suffers from mental diseases or "dis-eases": agoraphobia, anorexia, claustrophobia" (Quoted by Willingham in Wagner-Martin 312)

David emerges as a writer who is self-absorbed, detached and proud as Catherine gradually becomes the marginalized female 'other'. Like the American in "Hills Like White Elephants", David desires to control his female partner. In Steven C. Roe's words, "There is, to be sure, a despotic brutality in David's character, a desire to master and control otherness, to preside over the world rather than participate in it." (Wagner-Martin 314) The review-clippings make David a hero, a demi-God; they flatter David and the egomaniacal writer's persona, and he savours the element of hero-worship. Catherine finds this act of his self-destructive. It is interesting to note that David is conscious of his self-destructive act and yet continues to indulge in it. As he says: "I've had them before... They're bad for you but it doesn't last." (24) It, however does last and gradually David alienates Catherine from himself and annihilates Catherine's self. Roe states: "[B]ecause the primary thrust of the libido is towards the ingestion of all realities into the self," George Steiner claims, "there runs through human relations a drive towards the pulverization of the rival persona" (Quoted by Roe in Wagner Martin 314)

It is noteworthy that Catherine eventually degenerates into madness. Hemingway denies Catherine Bourne the creativity, which he bestows on her husband. In his personal life, Hemingway did detest many women artists/writers though he was also envious of the achievements of some. With his contemporary male white authors, Hemingway shared the conviction that women lacked something that is essential to genius. As Comley and Scholes state:

From where Hemingway was positioned, the best he had to offer was madness, and the best madness he could fashion was what he finally gave to Catherine Bourne, complete with a logic that could make the irrational sound as rational as you please and with the further capacity to turn reason on her own madness and discuss it. (Comley and Scholes 66).

Catherine persistently continues to work on her own narrative but she shows a reluctance at the outset to get her work published and she without even reading what David has written shows an unwillingness to publish David's narrative too. Cixous has analyzed the creative woman artist's relationship and attitude towards publishing. Cixous maintains that: "publishing houses are the crafty obsequious relayers of imperatives handed down by an economy that works against us and off our backs.... Smug-faced readers, managing editors, and big bosses don't like the true texts of women—female-sexed texts. That kind scares them" ("Laugh", 310). (Quoted by Willingham in Wagner-Martin 306) Catherine, having full faith in her own unwritten libidinal text begins to be critical of David's worth as a writer. She tells Marita: "...He writes in those ridiculous child's notebooks....He makes mistakes in spelling and grammar too....Of course his French is worse,...actually he's illiterate.... His handwriting is terrible too..." (215-216) In Catherine's mind, the text that David has penned and the ideal text that she wanted to be written become rivals. She becomes destructive in her actions, as she herself had forewarned, because her spontaneous creativity gets foiled. As Comley and Scholes have viewed it: "Her thwarted creativity—thwarted because, in the Hemingway text, this is a boundary no woman can cross—turns her into the puritanical castrating mother who destroys her boy-man's connection to the primitive." (Comley and Scholes 62-63) After she admits that she has burned the manuscripts, David plainly refuses to talk to Catherine about his writing and also ruthlessly succeeds to shut Catherine out of his life. He reveals his potent rage in an angry outburst: "All I want to do is kill you..." (223) David, of course, does not kill her but he kills her voice; he verbally silences her. Catherine however, never backs out from her intentions. She leaves David to focus on her own text to which she remains absolutely committed. Hemingway's America, like

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Wharton's, fails to be the land of liberty when it comes to the question of the woman of artistic and intellectual disposition. Like Ellen Olenska in *The Age of Innocence*, the woman artist is banished, rejected and symbolically killed.

David's struggle with his past, with his psychic and creative impulses is finally overcome and he emerges as a writer. Added to that, influenced by a sculpted piece of art by Rodin, David assumes a female position in bed, enjoys those private erotic moments and yet reveals a reluctance to admit it. This is because such assumptions of feminine role-playings reveal a latent wish for castration. According to Comley and Scholes, "In *The Garden of Eden*, then, Hemingway has positioned his surrogate, David Bourne, in an intolerable double bind: the source of his creativity lies in what for him is the forbidden territory of the feminine." (Comley and Scholes 60) It is the erotic performance of both Catherine and Marita that breaks loose David's artistic abilities and enables him to reach the territory where his quest for fictional truth is realized. Unfortunately, the ending in the published version of the novel fails to illuminate the reader about the text with an intense transgressive eroticism and the desire to enter a territory of creative textuality by appropriating with the help of women a kind of a psychosexual femininity.

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All quotations from *The Garden of Eden* are from New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986 with a preface by Charles Scribner, Jr.

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Terry Mcmillan's Womanist Men: A Study Of Disappearing Acts And A Day Late And A Dollar Short

Shyamasree Basu

African-American history in the twentieth century documents the community coming of age and establishing their distinct racial identity after years of racial oppression. Although the image/identity of the community is now established as that of a resilient group, there is a certain problematic area in their national identity which has arisen due to a number of socio-economic causes. This problematic area is the uneasy alliance between the African-American men and women.

The black woman has always enjoyed a privileged status in the black community as she is regarded as the one who has become the repository of racial memory and has been instrumental in preserving the rich cultural heritage of the race. The empowered status of women is evident in certain images that have become an integral part of the African-American culture. But these images like that of the black matriarch have only helped in 'fostering black women's oppression' (Hill Collins 4) as Patricia Collins notes in her study *Black Feminist Thought*. Essentialist readings of the African-American males have shown them in a very poor light. In most fiction by women we therefore have the women as resilient, determined survivors and the men as absentee fathers or absconding sons. Studies like Daniel P. Moynihan's *The Negro Family : The Case for National Action* have laid the blame for this unequal relationship on the family structure which he believed has been forced into a 'matriarchal structure' (Moynihan, 75). In his opinion this 'seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole and imposes as crushing burden on the Negro male' (Moynihan, 75).

In recent years there has been a concerted effort by black women novelists to address and rectify this inequity in their community as it seriously damaged their national identity by placing the women in a position of privilege and endowing the men every negative attribute. Alice Walker was one of the first feminist theorists to advocate a holistic approach in dealing with black history and culture. She points out that the need of the hour was 'womanism' and not 'feminism'. In her collections of essays, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* she defines the word 'womanist' as a person who is 'committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female (Walker 1-2). Thus through this coinage we see an attempt to restore the uneasy alliance between men and women by asking others to care for the entire race

instead of trying to further their own interest. The trajectory of black women's literature provides evidence that womanist characters can help to rectify this deep-seated gender disparity within the black community.

Terry McMillan is one such womanist artist and through her depiction of male characters we see a womanist's attempt to address a problem which threatens her community's identity as a group. McMillan works in the genre of urban romance that takes place in an urban setting and focuses on gender relationships. The characters are engaged in negotiating their careers and personal lives and surviving in spite of their insecurities.

Disappearing Acts (1989) was McMillan's second novel and the protagonists are Zora, an educated woman and an aspiring musician and songwriter and Franklin, a blue collar worker. Although the two of them belong to two different worlds they feel instantly attracted and start a live-in relationship. But the relationship is doomed to fail as both of them come from different worlds. McMillan uses a double narration where the two characters narrate their version of events and comment on the relationship. In trying to show the conflicted gender relationships McMillan faithfully describes Franklin's insecurities and failings but at the same time also tries to bring out his sensitive nature. On the one hand Franklin is proud of Zora's singing abilities and even her urbane charms but his admiration is also tinged with resentment as she has a steady career and he cannot hold down a single job. The delineation of Zora's character is also done astutely. Although McMillan is careful not to project these women as the "mules of the world"¹ she faithfully observes the experiences of black women who continue to suffer in their relationships because of black men trying to evade responsibility. The relationship carries with it all inherent tensions of a man and a woman within the African-American family, it is something more than the relationship between the victimizer and victim, oppressor and oppressed. Her delineation of the man (Franklin) is sympathetically done. For example, Franklin's inability to buy Zora a birthday gift, brings out his sensitive nature. Franklin's meeting with Zora's father is also significant and when he confesses to Zora :

He just told me to go ahead and be a man. That just
because I got laid off from time to time, that ain't no
reason to feel like less than one. I needed somebody to
tell me that baby—another man. (*Disappearing Acts*, 123).

In spite of these moments of tenderness, the inevitable rift occurs. Zora aborts her first child but keep her second one on Franklin's insistence. But Franklin cannot handle her pregnancy and the additional responsibilities and after an outburst of violence, Zora leaves him and has her baby alone. Franklin

comes back after three months, sober and with a decent job, willing to shoulder his responsibilities, but they decide to give each other time before resuming, their relationship. This novel ends with both of them deciding to play scrabble to pass the night. The game of scrabble has been used symbolically in the novel. The game is used to show them as intellectual equals and more importantly it also stimulates their love life and diffuses the tension. Zora and Franklin decide to make a new beginning with this game and therefore it is a hint that from now on both of them will be equal partners in the relationship.

Franklin's character is astutely observed and it is to McMillan's credit that she projects him as a man who tries to succeed on the professional as well as personal fronts. Paulette Richards (Richards, 146) quotes Valerie Sayer's review² of the novel where the latter had remarked on Franklin's characterization as being done in an 'affecting' manner. Richards adds that Franklin's characterization is a failure on McMillan's part since he fails both as a romance hero and a socialist realist hero. However, I feel that McMillan in *Disappearing Acts* was still trying to hone her skills at the characterization of a black man who negates the stereotype of the dissipated individual. Franklin is sketched along the lines of 'trifling men' (Richards, 146-147) found in blues music and Zora's encounters with him closely parallels the love and trouble tradition of black literature where eligible men can be good lovers but eventually spell out trouble because of their inability to shoulder domestic/family responsibilities. Franklin's return to Zora at the end of the novel is a positive sign that black men were trying to take, reopen and strive for acquiring wholeness as members of a family.

In her novel *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* she creates another Black male character who goes against the stereotypical images of the Black man. Patricia Hill Collins has noted in her study *Black Feminist Thought* that certain stereotypes of black women as mammy figures welfare mothers etc were deliberately fostered by dominant structures of oppression to ensure ideological control (Hill Collins, 70-96). One can also say that a similar set of negative stereotypes was also fostered for the Black male as economically subservient to women and more importantly unable to provide emotional support to her. McMillan even though writing urban romances tries to rectify such oppressive stereotypes by creating male characters who are self supporting and try to make good partners to the women like Winston in *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*.

In her most popular novel *Waiting to Exhale* (1993) McMillan, however, fails to provide such male characters as her focus is on the 'emergent woman' (Hill Collins, 95-96) of the 90s (this phenomenon has been discussed by Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* as the 'emergent women thesis'). The

women in the novel form a sisterhood, but spend more time weighing dating options among eligible black men within the community.

A Day Late and a Dollar Short (2001) is McMillan's most ambitious project to date. It is regarded as a tour-de-force and is her first attempt at the 'family saga' novel which has been quite popular in the African-American tradition. Viola Price is the matriarch of the family and is married to Cecil Price. They have been married for over thirty years but when the novel starts their relationship has broken up. Viola is not at all bitter about separation, in fact she is relieved.

He's a bad habit I've had for thirty-eight years which would make him my husband. Between him and these kids, I'm worn out. It's a miracle I can breathe at all.
(*A Day Late and a Dollar Short* 1)

However, a pat of Viola feels lonely without Cecil :

In all honesty, I really ain't missed him personally, but what I do miss is his presence. (ADLaaDS21)

As it is a family-saga novel, McMillan weaves the plot with the narration of every member of the Price family. Although the novel explores a number of relationships within the family, the two male characters Cecil Price and Lewis (Viola's Son) are the ones who bear the stamp of McMillan's meticulous characterization of the African-American male. The novel moves in and out of the lives of the Prices but the final episode of the novel is the reunion of the Price family for the Thanksgiving dinner after Viola's death. As per her instructions the Price open letters left to them by Viola, and what she says in these letters can be regarded as her last testament. In her letters to Cecil and Lewis we find the voice of a woman who understands the African-American male psyche very well. More importantly these letters are her attempt to assure them that their failures are not exclusively due to their faults. In her letter to Cecil she points out.

You ain't never done nothing deliberate to hurt me and I appreciate that. I know I turned into a first class bitch over these five or ten years... I guess you started turning to somebody else for comfort. And do me a few favours Cecil. Try to see your kids every now and then. Talk to them on her telephone. Let them get to know you so when you gone, you'll be missed too, And you be happy. (ADLaaDS 415-416).

This letter is Viola's attempt to absolve Cecil of the guilt that he had been feeling ever since he moved in with another woman and Viola had died the

day the divorce notice had been served. It is also significant that she admits her own failure in making her marriage work. More importantly, she encourages Cecil to re-establish himself as a 'father' by connection with the children.

Lewis, Viola's son is the standard African American youth with a criminal record, failure to provide child support and unable to keep a job. Viola's advice to Lewis is :

But anyway Lewis, even though you done had problems these past ten or fifteen years, I still wish I would a had two more of you cause you got a heart of gold ... Do something with your son. I don't care if you ain't got a thousand dollars, just send something and do something before he grown ... You had a daddy but you don't even know Cecil do you? Try to get to know him before her join me? It ain't too late, you know.(ADLaADS 424-425).

Viola, perhaps, realises that Lewis and Cecil never had a meaningful father-son relationship and urges both of them to be there for the family. In fact, this is the problem for most African-American middle-class households, the son has no positive paternal influence and therefore he cannot grow up to be a father figure, too. It is ironical that Viola the matriarch, who had always chastised both of them in her lifetime actually asks them to mend their relationship.

Womanist artists talk about taking responsibility for the entire community. In feminist discussions of black literature (or any other literature) identity is always spoken of, along with difference. However womanist artists have for the first time through their portrayal of African-American men and women in their fiction tried to create or at least encourage a new kind of theoretical approach. McMillan's creation of these men are womanist ones because she present them as flawed individuals but concludes by making them willing to assume responsibility, for their actions and for their families (in the course of the novel). This in turn leads to fostering a positive image of the African-American men, which in turn creates a positive national identity. McMillan's attempts, as this paper has tried to show is aimed at addressing the unequal relationship between men and women in the African-American culture. Thus through the characters of Franklin (*Disappearing Acts*) and Lewis and Cecil (*A Day Late and a Dollar Short*) she tries to suggest ways to improve man-woman relationship within the community, with a little help from the women. In both these novels the men turn out to be responsible males and assume the role of dutiful fathers and understanding men, thus proving that the model

of male development, which had been flawed in the African-American culture, can actually be rectified.

Notes & Reference :

1. Black women were referred to as the mules of the world since they had to bear the oppression of the white race as well as that of Black men. Cf. Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
2. Richards cites Valerie Sayer's review (of McMillan's novel), 'Someone to Walk Over Me' in *New York Times Book Review*, August 6, 1989, p. 8.

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The *Whileawayian* World of Pleasure: Tracing Homoeroticism in Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*

Prasita Mukherjee

Ars erotica came into being from Greek mythology where Eros or Aros was the primordial god of lust, love, and intercourse and was also worshipped as a fertility deity. The Roman counterpart was Cupid (desire), also known as Amor (love). An attendant to Aphrodite, Eros's primary duty was to imbue the primordial force of love among mortals. Also, according to tradition Eros was principally the patron of male love, while Aphrodite patronized heterosexual love. It was an all—Aphrodisiac show till LGBT/Queer theories and praxes came into existence from the latter half of the twentieth century. Earlier it was taboo to speak about it and was considered to be a case for treatment within clinical medicine by psychotherapy and electro-convulsive therapy. But with liberal sexologists like Havelock Ellis in the foray it gradually demanded legitimacy and was regarded as a ‘congenital anomaly’ rather than a pathological case.

Linguistics also offers valuable clues to the systematic shifts of this notion—in the *Oxford English Dictionary* the terms “drag” and “lesbian” can be traced back to the 1870s while “queer”, “queen” “pansy” and “homo” seem to be a part of the language post-1920. However the term ‘homosexual’ first appeared in English in 1892 in an early translation of Krafft-Ebing’s sexological compendium *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1892. Thus it may be said that contemporary LGBT identities did not emanate due to the benevolence of the medical/legal institutions which claim to have accommodated it but “were the product of a complex interaction between familiar, subcultural values and practices...and attempts at control by the state and the professions”. (Glover and Kaplan, 93)

However, Tyler argues that: “hegemony is always in process, as subcultures engage in a style politics which denaturalizes the apparent universality of the meanings and identities of the dominant culture. Yet subcultures themselves seek to consolidate identity and community through their appeals to counter-norms and essences, to motivated rather than purely arbitrary signs.” (Weed and Schor, 241)

Since 1945 and more so after 1960 there was a conscious effort on the part of theorists and critics to nurture the politics of representation and identity within the sphere of ‘queer politics’ as it is preferably referred to, insisting on its essential “anti-identity” and claiming to be an attempt towards self-

constitution and self-identification, thereby negating heteronormativity. In *Gender Trouble* Judith Butler argues that biology cannot determine an individual's destiny and considers gender to be a cultural construct that a sexed body assumes. She also opines that "it does not follow that the construction of men will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that women will interpret only female bodies...there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two... man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and a woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one." (Butler 10)

The actualization of the aforementioned notion may be observed in feminist utopian narratives which explore difference in the context of feminist discourse. In the search for an ideal community, it considers the existence of social stratification and problematizes it with the conscious use of binaries within the narrative. As Frances Bartkowski states, "The feminist utopian novel is a place where theories of power can be addressed through the construction of narratives that test and stretch the boundaries of power in its operational details". (Bartkowski 5) It is firmly rooted in interrogating the present and the place of women in it, and often considers multiple layers of oppression in its analysis. It predicts future manifestations of current social and technological experimentation and confronts current problems by increasing the visibility of those ills, often in exaggerated terms. Moreover, it believes in separating women from men as the latter create trouble with their pre-conditioned and socially/culturally dictated perspectives and behaviour. Considering the patriarchal system to be the major cause of socio-political and economic problems, it aims at creating a haven for women where she is equal to and/or superior to man. Thus it is a subversion of the nightmare world of dystopia which usually extrapolates elements of contemporary society and functions as a warning against a modern trend. At their core, all utopian movements seek to remould human nature- the feminist movement seeks to achieve a society in which gendered social and psychological differences are eradicated. Hence the concept of feminist utopia may be an example of "gender-bending"—implying "a way out, subverting a role through parody or the deliberate cultivation of ambiguity: what was once dutifully thought to be fixed becomes chameleon-like, a part to be played with style, a chance to mock and shock". (Glover and Kaplan ix)

Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) is a pertinent example in point and the text under analysis in this paper. Here, the lives of four women living in parallel worlds that differ in time and space have been depicted and Russ also suggests "a second possible separatist future for women" by "illustrating how women live on earth and how they might live in an all—female utopia"

(Little 325). When they cross over to each others' worlds, their different views on gender roles startle each others' preexisting notions of womanhood. Their encounters influence them to evaluate their lives and shape their ideas of what it means to be a woman. Russ depicts many modes of domination of women by men and suggests that the potential for the termination of that dominance is a new socio-political order. Each of the four main characters embodies a different response to male oppression, depending in part on her social context. Joanna, one of the characters, calls herself the "female man" (Russ 5) because she believes that she must forego her identity as a woman in order to be respected. Her metaphorical transformation is in keeping with her decision to seek equality by rejecting women's dependence on men. By creating several parallel universes around "Whileaway" where men have no roles (all of them having died centuries ago in a plague) she portrays the efficacy of women who have evolved a society in which they fulfill all necessary roles. Thus Russ uses queer perspectives as modus operandi for resistance and in doing so the characters get involved in a non-phallocentric erotic power game for viable existence.

A comprehensive description of Whileaway provided by Russ exemplifies the ideal community that is envisioned by utopists which they believe can only be possible in a culture that derecognizes the existence of the male sex and the social evils that are commonly associated with them:

"...You cannot fall out of the kinship web and become sexual prey for strangers, for there is no prey and there are no strangers- the web is worldwide...no one who will follow you and try to embarrass you by whispering obscenities in your ear, no one who will attempt to rape you...no one who will stand on street corners, hot-eyed and vicious, jingling loose change in his pants pocket..." (ibid. 82) There is a gradual shift from this typically heterosexist assumption towards a more lesbian feminist perspective which Russ calls "new feminism" (ibid. 43). An inclusive view on the same has been offered by Adrienne Rich which states:

"I mean the term lesbian continuum to include a range- through each woman's life and throughout history of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital experience with another woman. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including the sharing of a richer inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support...we begin to grasp breadths of female history and psychology which have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited, mostly clinical, definitions of lesbianism". (Showalter, 209)

This sentiment of caring for and understanding women is well represented in *The Female Man* when Russ says:

“This book is written in blood.
Is it written entirely in blood?
No, some of it is written in tears.
Are the blood and tears all mine?

Yes, they have been in the past. But the future is a different matter...”(ibid. 95)

From this excerpt it is evident that women, as a group are marginalized-systemically and systematically. Russ also delineates the background which invites resistance as agency among women to emancipate themselves. They come to believe that their right to make conscious choices is thwarted within the oppressive regime of patriarchy and hence there is an attempt towards escaping from the “dis-order and dis-ease of gender” (Glover and Kaplan 109). She states: “...everybody knows that what women have done that is really important to constitute a great, cheap labor force that you can zip in when you’re at war and zip out again afterwards but to be mothers, to form the coming generation, to give birth to them, to nurse them, to mop floors for them, to love them, cook for them, clean for them, change their diapers, pick up after them, and mainly sacrifice themselves for them. That is the most important job in the world. That’s why they don’t pay you for it.” (Russ 137) and it seems to echo Betty Friedan’s argument in *The Feminine Mystique* where she says: “Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate ...sandwiches with her children...lay beside her husband at night- she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question- Is this all?... Over and over women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity.”(15) Again a similar situation is posed and gravely resented by Russ when she introduces the Dadier family. Characters like Jeannine (soft and docile with dreams galore; but is confused somewhere) are instructed by her family to “marry someone who can take care of you...who has a good job, somebody you can respect; marry him. There’s no other life for a woman...”. (Russ, 114) A little later we are attuned to a chapter called *The Great Happiness Contest* which is a series of caustic comments about women who assume that they are complete and “fantastically happy” as each of the four claims to be happier than the other. She also incorporates a dialogue between ‘He’ and ‘She’ where ‘he’ says that he “really admire(s) refined, cultivated, charming women who have careers” but when his own spouse is the woman in question then he changes his mind

and says: “you can’t make money. Only I can...stop working.” As she insists, he calls her “irrational” and tries to convince her by saying that he “can make money” and he will “give it” to her because he “love(s)” her. ‘She’ immediately retaliates by saying: “Why can’t you stay at home...why should I be glad because I can’t earn a living?” He becomes defensive and says that he is “displeased” and commands her to become “the sweet girl” he had married and concludes his statement with: “There is no use arguing with a woman”. (ibid. 118)

Feminist critics would be pleased with the stance that ‘she’ takes on “the problem that has no name” (Friedan 15) and the resistance that is offered. In fact this is the primary contention put forth in feminist utopia and Whileaway is an extension of the same. It is in this circumstance that queer politics plays a vital role in making an attempt to de-stabilize hegemony and stabilize power equations in society. It is used as effective agency and there is a total subversion of gendered identities. The women are capable of making existential choices—they marry other women whom they truly love (Janet and Vittoria); there is transgendering involved; women satisfy their desire by making love to other women and above all a very pertinent difference is presented within the narrative from various perspectives. Thus queer may be connoted as that which “lacks the sexual fixity and coherence once thought to typify heterosexuals, homosexuals, lesbians and gay men.” (Waugh 428) However, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick offers a more comprehensive definition of the same when she says: “Queer can refer to the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or *can’t* be made) to signify monolithically.” (Sedgwick 8)

The “flexibility” of sex/gender is well-represented in *The Female Man* particularly preceding instances of desire and eroticism between women. However this situation is problematized since by this single act the psychologically emancipated women try to prove the irrelevance of heterosexual relationships. They create a virtual condition and make an attempt at enabling *other* women (the conformists) to get a flavour of all that heteronormative relationships would provide. Moreover the USP in this case is the egalitarianism that is ubiquitous in every association. A garish example is the Laura-Janet stand: Laura is a “victim of penis-envy so (she) can’t ever be happy or lead a normal life... (she) didn’t want to be a girl”. Janet immediately took control of the situation and “unbuttoned Laur’s shirt and slid her pants down to her knees...how, swooning they fell into each other’s arms”. Laura was not very comfortable about the proposition and confessed that she had “never slept with a girl... (she) couldn’t (and) wouldn’t want

to. That's abnormal". But she comes to understand that the normal-abnormal binary was a mere psycho-social construct and states: "To do what I wanted would be normal, unless what I wanted was abnormal, in which case it would be abnormal to please myself and normal to do what I didn't want to do, which isn't normal". Carole-Anne Tyler provides an explanation for the same—"the wish for one's own terms and one's proper identity, perhaps the most deeply private property of all, is an impossible desire since both are held in common with others in the community as an effect of the symbolic...there persists a paradoxical desire to be self-present to others, to come-out as our proper self to ourselves through the recognition of our proper name and image. As signifiers of our selves with which we are deeply identified, we wish our name and image to transparently reflect our being, like the iconic sign, and to be existentially or naturally bound to it, like and index." (Weed and Schor 230-231)

There is a significant change in Laura which is evident from the fact that she subsequently makes *the choice*. She falls in love with Janet Eavason and asks whether it is reciprocal. Unfortunately Whileaway does not permit "sexual relations with anybody considerably older or younger than oneself" probably because there may be a possibility of a power-crisis for the too young/old, as the situation permits. This is very well represented in Ismat Chughtai's short story *The Quilt* in which Begum Jaan makes love to the "child" narrator in the absence of Rabbu (the message lady). Begum Jaan had been abandoned by her husband and it was the inherent desire to experience sexual pleasure that prompted her to get into the act. In this context she becomes the 'powerless Other' longing for the "penis-phallus" which according to Lacan "is the proper representative of life and death, and also of desire itself" (Weed and Schor 245). Thus in order to reconcile with her situation she looks for a way out and finds solace by getting Rabbu to message her body and also to give her a stand at night which is described as an elephant struggling under the quilt. On one night, when Rabbu is away, the child is coaxed into the act - "A strange fear overcame me. Begum Jaan's deep set eyes focused on me and I felt like crying. She was pressing me as though I were a clay doll...she was like a person possessed. I could neither scream nor cry." (Chughtai, 20). But Russ presents a contrasting situation in the Janet-Laura liaison as for Laura "it was the first major sexual pleasure she had received from another human being in her entire life", though "incompletely and desperately inadequate" Manju Kapur in *A Married Woman* also explores a similar case of female bonding/friendship and the protagonist Astha describes the experience to be "strange" as she was more used to making love to an adversary rather than to a friend.

Same sex marriages are also a norm at Whileaway as Janet falls in love with Vittoria at twenty-two and marries her. Their courtship is described vividly and one can find shades of female friendship in their relationship which culminates in nuptials. "The truth was we had been friends for a long time, good friends...Vitti was the anchor in my life at school, the chum, the pal; we had gossiped together, eaten together...I groped for her hand in the dark...(and felt) the pleasure of pain, the dreadful longing." Finally came the proposal and Vitti agreed- "thus connected (they) slid down to the forest floor...We got more equally together and kissed each other...This is Vitti, whom I know, whom I like; and the warmth of that real affection inspired me with more, the love with more passion, more despair, enough disappointment for a whole lifetime." According to Janet this engagement was because "it seemed to me that we were victims of the same catastrophe and that we ought to get together somewhere"- it was an identification with one another which in Freudian terms is "the support of group identity". Critics and activists unanimously observe that "similar totalizations of identity seem to be a necessary political stratagem in the ongoing war of hegemony and resistance to it" and is termed as "strategic essentialism" by Gayatri Spivak (Weed and Schor 237). Judicially it was the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, the first American court "to hold unequivocally that lesbian and gay couples have a constitutionally protected right to marry", otherwise it would be a breach of the law/principle respecting individual autonomy and equality under law. Moreover the 2000 Census in the United States of America revealed that 34% of lesbian couples and 22% gay couples have at least one child under the age of eighteen living in their home, compared to 46% of married opposite-sex couples having minor children at home. In fact this biological impediment of procreation and rearing of children is a major weapon in the arsenal of the opponents. In *The Female Man*, Janet discloses to Laura that "I have had two children", one of them being Yuriko Janetson.

Transgendering is another subversive element in the text and is well marked by statements like: "I had just changed into a man, me, Joanna. I mean a female man, of course my body and soul were exactly the same"(Russ, 5) and "I turned into a man" (ibid. 20). These may be attributed to the concept of the transman, often referred to as FTM (Female to Male) meaning a person who was female by birth but feels it to be an incomplete identity and tags herself as male. Here Janet Eavason is the one who undergoes this experience and it is primarily to take over the responsibilities of either gender in Whileaway. In doing so she tries to establish her supremacy over the male sex and there is a tone of haughtiness when she says at an interview that initially men were missed but now no one cares or remembers. Thus it is

an all-woman show and for this reason Janet takes control of the situation by transforming into a man when the situation demands. Moreover there is a contrasting frame presented in the character of Cal, Jeannine's love interest who she rejects because of his impotence and thinks that he is a transvestite. She also says that his virility is negligible and he cries on making love which is unusual for a man. Thus the Laura-Janet partnership poses to be more powerful from all aspects. There is a direct reference to sex-change through surgery in *The Female Man* and Russ says that "Manlanders buy children from Womanlanders...(and) sex-change surgery begins at sixteen" Some make "full change" whereas some opt for "half a change" and she categorizes them as "real-men" and "the changed or "the half-changed". This is in sync with Virginia Woolf's use of androgyny, bisexuality and trans-sexualism in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Orlando* which has powerful political implications too. Critics like Henke and Jensen argue that "Clarissa is basically lesbian" (Kennard 157) and Orlando, Woolf's love letter to Vita Sackville-West is reviewed as a work which explores the link between "enforced heterosexuality, a strict binary gender system, and political and economic power" (ibid.161).

Thus the primary aim of utopia as argued by Toril Moi in *Sexual and Textual Politics* "has always been a source of political inspiration for feminists and socialists alike. Confidently assuming that change is both possible and desirable, the utopian takes off from a negative analysis of its own society in order to create images and ideas that have the power to inspire and revolt against oppression and exploitation".(121). Thus queering becomes a pleasurable process which is used as agency to provide succor to *woman* by negating/derecognizing the male-female binary in the form of heteronormativity and by breaking the socially constructed silence which is tantamount to death.

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Child Abuse And The Postmodern Family: Re-reading Janet Fitch's *White Oleander* And Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*

Madhumita Basu

Post modernism is marked by a world in which order, structure and meaning are constantly called into question. Gone is the conceptualization of human life as purposeful and imbued with meaning. Patricia Dredsel Tobin in her in her work *Time and the Novel : The Genealogical Imperative* writes that “the disappearance of god, the end of history, the demise of man, the death of the novel, the murder of the father—these are apocalyptic phrases by which we now measure the passage of our culture”(p.14). Twentieth century is marked by a series of binary categories which dominates economics and politics. The most important among them are power and powerlessness; male and female; profits and ethics and legality and illegality. The radical economic transformations of the last three decades have done much to foster this new frame. In the present era the traditional family in the U.S has been replaced by cohabitation, radically shifting relationships, out of wedlock births, single parent families, step parent families and blended families. The traditional family with two biological parents is now viewed as an oppressive and bankrupt institution which marred the individual’s free fulfillment. Feminists view the family as a suppressive unit which economically enslaves a woman and causes despair and mental illness. Hence a fashionable anti-family cult began to spread in America through films and weekly colour supplements. Movies like *The Rebel Without a Cause* expressing the plight of adolescents in traditional families and television shows like *The Murphy Brown Show* which glamorized the single mother household began to be popularized. With sexual liberation hedonistic life and single motherhood began to be seen as a woman’s assertion of her feminist identity. However social scientists have observed that the planned destruction of the family have made the nation’s children psychologically vulnerable. In this essay I would discuss the debilitating effects of single mother families on children as articulated by Janet Fitch, and Dorothy Allison in the novels *White Oleander*, and *Bastard Out of Carolina*. For my analysis I would be using the empirical psychological theories on child abuse and trauma survivals.

Post World War II America saw an economic boom that led to the development of new technologies that made household work less difficult. However this resulted in women feeling inadequate. In *The Feminine Mystique*

Friedan wrote that women are victims of a false belief system that requires them to find identity and meaning in their lives through husbands and children. Friedan described the condition of women in traditional families as being trapped in “comfortable concentration camps” (p.337) where they completely lost their identity. Friedan’s views triggered the women’s movement and led to an anti-marriage, anti-family attitude in America. The radical feminists like Kate Millet and Shulamith Firestone expressed their hostility towards the family. In her work *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* Firestone wrote “The institution [of marriage] consistently proves itself unsatisfactory- even rotten... The family is directly connected to- is even the cause of- the ills of the larger society” (p.254) Hence there was a constant attempt on the part of the radical feminists to dismantle the institution of the family. Social scientists too have observed the decline of the traditional family.

The U.S Bureau of the Census of Population for 1960, 1970 and 1980 shows that in the 1970s the country recorded that the number of single parent families has grown seven times faster than two parents families. Statistical evidences reveal that in 1950, 12 out of every 100 children entered a broken family and children living with a single mother are six times more likely to live in poverty than are children whose parents are married. Of families with children in the lowest quintile of earnings, 73% are headed by single parents and 95% in the top quintile are headed by married couples. Historically unemployment and low wages were the main causes of poverty. Today the major cause of poverty is the family structure as David Ellwood in his book *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family* notes: “The vast majority of children who are raised entirely in a two parent home will never be poor during childhood. By contrast, the vast majority of children who spend time in a single parent home will experience poverty.” (p. 116). Single mothers have a high level of stress as they negotiate the dual task of work demands and parenthood. These mothers are often less supportive and affectionate. In these households with the absence of the other parent the entire burden of decision making and responsible childcare falls on one individual. Poverty results in potentially stressful conditions in children and they become victims of psychological disorders and adolescents from broken homes are more likely than those from intact homes to become victims of drug and sexual abuse.

In *White Oleander* Janet Fitch convincingly portrays the turmoil of children of single mother families. The novel narrates the tale of Astrid Magnussen, a twelve year old girl and the daughter of a single mother. Astrid’s mother Ingrid is a beautiful woman who dreams of a carefree refined life but has to face the challenges of a low paying job and the burden of bringing up a teenage daughter. Fitch in the novel explores that women have liberated

themselves from the trap of domesticity but have made themselves victims of oppressive working conditions and low paid jobs. Astrid constantly suffers from the guilt that she is keeping her mother from living the life of her dreams. Ingrid tries various means of disciplining her daughter and this is expressed in Astrid's speech: "I was the sole occupant of my mother's totalitarian state."(p. 21) Like a radical feminist she tutors her daughter to hate men. She instructs her daughter Astrid that "Love humiliates you, but hatred cradles you" (p. 54) Ingrid's problem is typical of what psychologists Annette U. Rickel, Meg Gerrard and Ira Iscoe have studied in their work *Social and Psychological Problems of Women*: "Single mothers are often socially isolated and lacking in social and emotional support... recent studies suggest that the presence of children may actually make mothers feel more unhappy, frustrated, helpless, anxious and incompetent... Single mothers often report increased use of coercion to discipline their children and problem communicating with them and responding to their needs"(p. 51). Ingrid treats her daughter like clay that she feels she can mould in any way she pleases. The manner in which she instructs her daughter reflects her mental disturbance: "Just make sure nothing is wasted. Take notes. Remember it all, every insult, every tear. Tattoo it on the inside of your mind. In life knowledge of poisons is essential. I've told you nobody becomes an artist unless they have to"(p. 75). Ingrid however is unable to sustain her hatred for men and she frivolously enters into an affair. The novel reflects the darker side of a bohemian lifestyle. Ingrid's boyfriend abandons her after making love to her. She tells her daughter that "He made love to me and then said he had to leave because he had a date" (p. 35). Deranged by rejection Ingrid kills the man with the poison of oleander flowers. Astrid's mother is then imprisoned and Astrid is taken to a series of foster care homes. Postmodern family abolitionists consider foster homes as a substitute to traditional households. However The National Adoption Center found the chronic maltreatment which some of these children are subjected to in these foster homes. As a result some of these children suffer from symptoms of attachment disorder. Through Astrid's odyssey Fitch portrays the harrowing experience which children undergo in these homes.

Astrid's first foster mother Starr, is an ex-stripper and an alcoholic. She claims to have been saved by Jesus but she dresses like an off-duty stripper. Astrid soon finds herself falling in love with Starr's boyfriend Ray, a man old enough to be her father. The elderly man is unable to resist the charms of the teenage girl and they get into a sexual relationship. Maggie Gallagher in her notable work *The Abolition of Marriage* observes that daughters of unmarried mothers were "more likely to become sexually active in their teens and were to become involved with men that will abuse them" (p. 31). When

Starr learns about their relationship she starts behaving in an erratic manner and shoots Astrid three times. Ray whom she loves so desperately does not help her in any ways. *The Journal of Pediatrics* reported in 2002 that "Children residing in households with adults unrelated to them are eight times more likely to die of maltreatment than children in households with two biological parents." Astrid's next foster home treats her like a wage free servant. Here Astrid is made to do the chores of a baby-sitter, pot scrubber, laundry maid and beautician. One night Astrid is mauled by dogs and she is left with scars on her face and neck. Astrid's third foster home is another horror story. Here her foster mother Amelia Ramos keeps several foster girls but her main purpose is to use the government subsidy for her own benefit. She starves the girls and feeds them with nothing but dinner during week days. In desperate hunger Astrid scavenges through the garbage in search of food. Astrid is rescued by a case worker and her next foster mother Claire is kind and gentle. But Claire is clinically depressed and she kills herself. Astrid is then placed at the MacLaren Children's centre and here she is introduced to drugs. Astrid then gets deeper into drugs. The novel ends with Astrid living in poverty with her boyfriend Paul. She refuses to join her mother and ultimately alienates herself from her. Postmodern families have liberated individuals from repressive morality and allowed them sexual fulfillment. Fitch's novel reflects the narcissism, self indulgence and insensitivity of the adults (Ingrid, Starr and others) in these families and the detrimental effect it has on children.

Dorothy Allison was a victim of child abuse. In her work *Believing in Literature* Allison says that her writing has sprung forth from her sense of inner wound. Allison believes that trauma survivor's recovery can never be a complete one. Allison believes that "... true stories may be violent, distasteful, painful, stunning and haunting... But our true stories will be literature"(p. 14). Allison retells her childhood pain in her semi autobiographical novel *Bastard Out Of Carolina* where her child narrator Bone recounts her terrible tale of physical abuse in the hands of her step father. Hence the novel can also be considered as Allison's profound exploration of the impact of out of wedlock childbearing. In recent times sexual liberation have led to an enormous rise in teenage pregnancy. Bone is the daughter of her fifteen year old unwed mother. In the beginning of the novel Bone suffers from a sense of namelessness due to the abandonment of her natural father. Like all children Bone too desires for a father. She wanted her family to be like the "families in the books in the library."(p.23) In order to sustain herself and her daughter Bone's mother marries Glen, a man who is not Bone's biological father. Michael Gordon in his work *The Family Environment of Sexual Abuse: A Comparison of Natal and Stepfather Abuse* observes that a girl child is seven times likely to be

molested by a stepfather than a biological father. Bone's step father physically abuses her and in the powerful descriptions the child narrator's screams are felt:

I stumbled back against the tub, terrified, praying Mama would come home fast. Mama would stop him. His left hand reached for me, caught my shoulder, pulled me over his left leg. He flipped my skirt up over my head and jammed it into that hand. I heard the sound of the belt swinging...It hit me and I screamed. Daddy Glen swang his belt again... I screamed for Mama.... (106)

Psychologists have observed that childhood abuse often result in profound pathological disorders in children. Being exposed to unbearable physical and sexual abuse, Bone becomes a victim of psychological fantasies. She starts imagining people watching her being beaten by her step father "Sometimes ... I would imagine the ones who watched. Someone had to watch..." (p. 113) Hence Bone develops a compulsive desire to be watched by people when she is being abused and occasionally indulges in somatic acts of masturbation. The psychiatrist Anna Freud in her book *The Ego and the Mechanism of Defence* points out that often these abused children have a tendency of "impersonating the aggressor... imitating his aggression" (113) This is seen in the quarrel scene that breaks between Bone and her friend Shannon. Bone's aggressive verbal abuse towards Shannon reminds the readers of Glen's abusive language. The psychologist John Briere in his book *Child Abuse Trauma: Theory and Treating of the Lasting Effects* observes that victims of child abuse often develop suicidal tendencies. This tendency to annihilate herself in order to escape the demonic physical attacks is reflected in Bone. In her sense of desperation she says:

I was no warrior. I was just a girl scared and angry. When I saw myself in Daddy Glen's eyes, I wanted to die... Everything felt hopeless. He looked at me and I was ashamed of myself. It was like sliding down an endless hole, seeing myself at the bottom, dirty, ragged.... (209)

Feminists discard the role of a biological father in a child's life. But Allison's novel narrates a child's deep inner longings for a powerful and loving and caring father. Even after being physically battered by Glenn, Bone painfully narrates, "a father's love would purify my heart, turn my bitter soul sweet, and lighten my Cherokee eyes" (p. 210)

Postmodernism is marked by the dissolution of the biological two parent family. Traditional relation between sexes is seen just as a matter of domination and submission. The present era is marked by rampant illegitimacy, widespread divorce and a generation of unloved and uncared for kids. The family abolitionists and iconoclastic thinkers fail to recognize the fundamental notion

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that a human child needs years of nurturing to develop to a responsible adult. Fractured homes cause instability and definitional crisis in children. For small children to believe that the world is a malevolent place in which they are subject to random acts of violence can be profoundly chilling. It is an act of destroying the child's entire sense of being. By presenting the reality of children in broken homes Fitch and Allison are interrogating the rhetoric of the family abolitionists. The two novels aptly reflect that by dismantling the traditional family structure these family abolitionists have merely increased the plight of the children and left them more insecure. Hence a call for a responsible parenthood is not binding oneself in the nostalgia trap but a step forward to save the children.

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